THE *HIEROS GAMOS* IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND IN ISRAEL

by

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PREFACE

The hieros gamos or "sacred marriage" first came to my attention through the writings of S. H. Hooke and E. O. James. They claimed it as a consistent feature of a common "myth and ritual pattern," whose outlines might be traced throughout the major cultures of the ancient Near East. This claim, which appeared to be copiously documented, especially aroused my interest with regard to its alleged bearing on the marital imagery in the writings of the Hebrew prophet Hosea.

It was the attempt to make use of some of their documentation, in a research paper on the "problem" of Hosea 1-3, which fixed the selection of this dissertation topic. Again and again I found myself disquieted by the nature and/or interpretation of the evidence adduced by those and other investigators, and thus increasingly skeptical concerning the thesis itself.

This study has therefore sought a position on the following questions:

(1) What evidence exists of the manifestation of the hieros gamos in the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria-Canaan, and Hebrew Palestine?

(2) Do the celebration(s) in these respective culture areas exhibit a common intention, to the degree that we may fairly speak of a "pattern" of celebration with regard at least to this one complex of myth and ritual?

The pursuit of these questions would have necessitated a very great deal of extramural research, but for the gracious and thoroughgoing cooperation of Mrs. Julia Bartling and her staff in the Reference Department of the University Library, whose Inter-Library Loan Office has secured materials for me from some nine other collections.

I am also indebted to Miss Shirley A. Lyon, Librarian of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and to Miss Alice Dagan, Librarian of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. Through their good offices, I was able to make free use of the stacks and reading rooms at those two institutions, and so considerably expedite my research.

My gratitude is likewise extended to the members of my examining committee, for their time and counsel, and especially to Professor James C. Spalding, of the School of Religion, for his guidance in preparing the dissertation for presentation. Professor Jonathan A. Goldstein, of the Departments of Classics and History, has kindly read the entire typescript with characteristic thoroughness, and saved me from numerous errors.

I am unusually indebted to Professor Dr. Einar von Schular and to Professor Dr. Rudolph Anthes, both of the Free University of Berlin. At the request of my dissertation supervisor, they have read the chapters on Mesopotamia and Egypt, respectively, and made a number of helpful suggestions.

Finally and most especially, I wish to express my appreciation to my dissertation supervisor, Professor Frederick P. Bargebuhr, of the School of Religion, whose personal and professional qualities have been instrumental in arousing and furthering my interest in these matters. I trust that he will accept whatever scholarship this treatise manifests as the appropriate token of my gratitude.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

PREFACE ii

ABBREVIATIONS viii

Chapter

I. METHODOLOGICAL PRECONSIDERATIONS 1

- The Ancient Weltanschauung 1
- Religion and Agriculture 6
- Myth and Ritual 8
- Diffusionism and Patternism 15
- The Myth and Ritual Pattern 23
- *Eigenart* and Phenomenology 27

II. THE LAND OF THE TWO RIVERS 30

- *Altmesopotamische Lebensgefühl* 30
- The Celebrations of the *Hieros Gamos* 41
  - Literature and incidence 41
  - The early dynastic period 45
  - The Second Dynasty of Lagash 47
  - The Third Dynasty of Ur 49
  - The First Dynasty of Isin 53
  - The Babylonian and Assyrian periods 55
  - Mari and the "Western Semites" 57
- Dying and Rising Gods 59
  - The Frazerian thesis 59
  - The burials at Ur 62
- Secondary Evidences of the Sacred Marriage 65
  - Art and artifacts 65
  - Myth and epic 71
- The Role-players 76
  - The king as Dumuzi 76
  - The priestess as Inanna 77
  - Priestesses and hierodules 79
- The Issue of the Sacred Marriage 86
  - Fertility 86

The king as divine filiation 93
Hieros Gamos and Vergöttlichung 97
The determination of the king's destiny 100

III. THE LAND OF THE TWO KINGDOMS 102

Patternism and Phenomenology Along the Nile 102
The Divinity That Hedged A King 107
The Mystery of the Divine Birth 110
    Papyrus Westcar 110
    Deir el Bahari and Luxor 111
    The post-imperial birthhouses 113
Festivals and Processions 118
    The beautiful feast of Opet 118
    The Sacred Marriage at Edfu 122
    The going-forth of Min 124
The Testimony of the Pryamid Texts 129
The Divine Birth as a Continuously Evolving Mystery . . . 131
    Historical summary of the evidence 131
    Mystery pro and con 136
Celebration and Celebrants 138
    Was the divine/royal birth enacted? 138
    A survey of sacerdotal personnel 141
The Mystery and Its Purpose 146
    The Pharaoh's right to rule 146
    The absence of fertility motifs 149
Mesopotamia and Egypt Compared 149

IV. HIEROGAMIC MYTH AND RITUAL IN ANCIENT CANAAN 153

The Situation Prior to the Ras Shamra Discoveries 153
Problems in the Use of the Ugaritic Materials 155
    The condition of the documents 155
    The nature of the texts 157
The Baal-Anat Cycle 163
    A house for Baal 163
    El and Asherah 166
    Baal and the heifer 168
    Baal and Anath 170
Shachar and Shalim 175
The Wedding of Nikkal 179
The Legend of King Keret 183
The Tale of Aqhat 187
Ugarit and the Fertile Crescent 190

V. HEBREW PALESTINE IN THE BIBLICAL ERA 194

Issues and Methods 194
    The influence of neighboring cults 195
    The problem of Biblical editing 196
    Was there an hieros gamos in Israel? 198
Yahweh as Mate 200
    Aetiological fragments 200
    Divine filiation in the Psalter 203
    Prophetic marital imagery 207
A Consort for Yahweh 210
    The pantheon at Elephantine 211
    Elephantine and the Jewish homeland 215
Royal and Priestly Role-Players 221
    The king as divine representative 221
    Prostitutes and hierodules 224
Festival Occasions 228
    The dance of the virgins 228
    Booths and nuptials chambers 231
Is Canticles A Ritual Text? 233
    The cultic interpretation 234
    Inclusion in the canon 239
    Alleged vestiges from the fertility cult 242
General Evaluation of the Evidence 249

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF THESIS 253

BIBLIOGRAPHY 255

ABBREVIATIONS

(a and b in the paginations refer to left and right columns)

AA - The American Anthropologist

AcO - Acta Orientalia

AJA - The American Journal of Archaeology

AJS - The American Journal of Sociology

AJSL - The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures

AKAT - K. H. Bernhardt, Das Problem der altorientalischen Konigsideologie im Alten Testament

ANEP - J. B. Pritchard (ed.), Ancient Near East in Pictures

ANET - ________, Ancient Near Eastern Texts

ARE - James Henry Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt

BAF - S. A. Pallis, The Babylonian Akîtu Festival

BANE - G. Ernest Wright (ed.), The Bible and the Ancient Near East

BIFAO - Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale

BiOr - Bibliotheca Orientalis

BJRL - Bulletin of the John Rylands Library

CML - G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends

FSAC - W. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity

HBS - S. N. Kramer, History Begins at Sumer

HTR - Harvard Theological Review

IB - G. A. Buttrick (ed.), The Interpreter's Bible

Intellectual Adventure - H. and H. A. Frankfort (eds.), The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man

JAOS - *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*

JBL - *The Journal of Biblical Literature*

JEA - *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*

JNES - *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

JRAS - *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*

JSS - *The Journal of Semitic Studies*

Kingship - H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*

LC - John Gray, *The Legacy of Canaan*

MAR - S. H. Hooke (ed.), *Myth and Ritual*

MAW - S. N. Kramer (ed.), *Mythologies of the Ancient World*

MIFAO - *Memoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*

MRAK - S. H. Hooke (ed.), *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*

MTE - François Daumas, *Les Mammisis des Temples Égyptiens*

Or - *Orientalia*

PAPS - *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*

Proceedings - C. J. Bleeker, et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 7th Congress for the History of Religions*

PT - Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary*

RA - *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale*

RB - *Revue Biblique*

RAR - Hans Bonnet, *Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte*

RGG^{3} - Kurt Galling (ed.), *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*

RHR - *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*

Sacral Kingship - *The Sacral Kingship* (VIIIth International Congress for the History of Religions

SAHG - A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, *Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete*

SJT - *The Scottish Journal of Theology*

SK - Geo. Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum*

SPAW - *Sitzungsberichte der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*

ST - *Studia Theologica*

Studies - Ivan Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East*

Thespis - T. H. Gaster, *Thespis*

ThLZ - *Theologische Literaturzeitung*

TZ - *Theologische Zeitschrift*

UL - C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature*

VT - *Vetus Testamentum*

ZAW - *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGICAL PRECONSIDERATIONS

The Ancient Weltanschauung

The hieros gamos, as defined in this study, should be understood to include the following components:

> A god and goddess meet in sexual union.
>
> The result of that union is the renewal of fertility in field and womb.
>
> The divine union is represented, at the human level, by an actual or mimed ritual union, in which the roles of the god and goddess are filled by the monarch/priest and his queen or a consecrated woman.

It must be added at once that the present writer is acquainted with no ancient Near Eastern text in which every element of this formula is explicitly contained. Even such a general enumeration as the one above can only be fully assembled, at present, by bringing together a variety of statements, hints, and opaque allusions from texts and monuments widely separated in time and space. The hieros gamos, as described above, is a scholarly construct.[1]

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[1] For the tentative suggestion that the complete formula is depicted in the rock-sculptures at Boghazköi, see James J. Frazer, Adonis, Attis, Osiris (3rd ed. rev.; London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1919), Vol. I, pp. 140-41. For a similar, more confident claim covering Babylon, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece, see Theodor H. Gaster, Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East (rev. ed.; Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 78-79. For critiques of these, see below, p. 65, n. 2 (Frazer), and pp. 14-15 (Gaster).

On the other hand, all of the elements mentioned above are found, singly and in varying combinations, in the ancient Near Eastern documents. Since the general goal of this study is to isolate the essential intent of each of these manifestations, one must begin by confronting certain inhibitions to understanding.

Such inhibitions are implicit in Leo Oppenheim's phrase: "our built-in Old and New Testament 'guidance system.'"[1] Two of them have indeed been formed in many, if not most, Western minds by association with the ancient Hebrew prophets. They are, specifically, our general inability to attribute reality to images, or holiness to sexual functioning.[2]

These inhibitions have more recently drawn their vitality from another source as well, and it is one which has increasingly separated the modern mind from the whole ancient Near Eastern religious psychology, including that of the Bible. Here the reference is to the distinction between the "scientific" and the "mythopoeic" responses to the phenomena of the experienced world.[1]

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[1] Ancient Mesopotamia: Portrait of a Dead Civilization (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 333. He comments: "A dewesternisation of the topic [Mesopotamian religion] is aimed at, although I fully realise that the aim is utopian and that work in this direction will have to wait for a generation of Assyriologists free from emotional and institutionalised interests in the religions of the ancient Near East" (ibid.).

[2] See, for example, Morris Jastrow's discussion of women in the Babylonian priesthood, concluding that "there is no evidence that obscene rites, as instanced by Herodotus, formed part of the regular cult of the goddess" (The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria [Boston: Ginn & Company, 1898], p. 660). Note further the implications of the affectation of rendering all sexual allusions in Latin. James Breasted resorts briefly to this technique in his translation of the hierogamy from Deir el Bahari (Ancient Records of Egypt: Historical Documents from the earliest times to the Persian conquest [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1906], Vol. II, pp. 196-98). Cf. Alexander Heidel's rendering of the copulation of Enkidu and the harlot (The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946], pp. 20-22, 27). Regarding images, see below, pp. 83-85.

The term "mythopoeic thought"[2] is used here to point to a variety of generalizations commonly made about the pre-scientific modes of human rationality.[3] Included among these are the assertions that the phenomenal world is seen as a "Thou" rather than as an "It,"[4] and that man therefore feels himself linked with all forms of life in "solidarity" or "consanguinity."[1] Moreover, this mode of response is bound to "the presence of its object." It is incapable of relating a given experience to a general class of such experiences, and so is unable to compare and criticize the single experience by means of past data or future expectations.[2] It therefore transpires that the "physics" of "mythical causality" are grounded in the principles of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* and *juxta hoc, ergo propter hoc*.[3]

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[1] "Between the biblical period and our own there has occurred the greatest revolution in men's ways of thinking that has taken place in all human history. The rise of modern science in the seventeenth century has transformed man's whole attitude to the world and his whole conception of his relation to it" (Alan Richardson, "Gnosis and Revelation in the Bible and in Contemporary Thought," The Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. IX, No. 1 [1956], p. 34).

[2] Another scholarly construct, which first came to the present writer's attention in H. and H. A. Frankfort et al., The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 8-12 and passim.

[3] W. F. Albright, modifying Levy-Bruhl, offers an alternative series of constructs: "proto-logical," "empirico-logical," and "logical" (From the Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process [2nd ed.; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1957], p. 2). The first stage, which seems to correspond generally with what is intended by "mythopoeic" (cf. ibid., pp. 168-69), "governed religion, and to some extent art and literature, down roughly to the late second millennium B.C., and was characteristic of magic and mythology down to much later periods in the Near East" (ibid., p. 2). Moreover, even after the rise of formal logic in Greece in the fifth century B.C., "it is quite true that the uneducated man often remains at bottom the same prelogical, corporative thinker as his remote forefathers and savage cousins" (ibid., p. 122).

[4] Frankfort, Intellectual Adventure, p. 4. Ernst Cassirer suggests that such a mode of response is easily reconstructed even among men of learning and culture. When we are under the impact of violent fear or anger, the things about us "no longer wear their usual faces," but "are tinged with the specific color of our passions" (An Essay on Man [New

When the phenomenal world is experienced as "Thou," and its physical and temporal sequences assumed to be causal, it follows that what the "myth" describes concerning the interpenetration of the divine and human realms is understood as ontologically real. The activity of the gods "corresponds" to the activity of men, and vice versa. In myth and ritual, man deliberately fosters this correspondence, and it is in this possibility that the power of mythical thought and action fundamentally

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Haven: Yale University Press, 1944], p. 77). One could think at once of a number of such "encounters," e.g., when after countless tugs on the flywheel, a power mower still "refuses" to start!

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[2] "Der Mythos hält sich ausschliesslich in der Gegenwart seines Objekts,--in der Intensität, mit der es in einem bestimmten Augenblick das Bewusstsein ergreift und von ihn Besitz nimmt. . . . Das Bewusstsein ist in ihm, als einem einfach Daseienden befangen--es besitzt weder den Antrieb noch die Möglichkeit, das hier und jetzt Gegebene zu berichtigen, zu kritisieren, es in seiner Objektivität dadurch einzuschränken, dass es an einem Nichtgegebenen, an einem Vergangenen oder Zukünftigen gemessen wird" (Cassirer, *Philosophie der Symbolischen Formen*, Vol. II, *Das Mythische Denken* [Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Verlag, 1925], pp. 47, 48).

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

resides.[1] This leads to the statement of one of the axial positions reached by the present investigation: namely that all efforts to express the "meaning" of ancient (or modern) myths through the technique of allegory ought to be avoided. Myth is not "symbolic," in the sense that it "points to" something lying on a different plane of being; it is rather identical with that to which it points.[2]

Allegory is therefore irrelevant to myth because the distinction between the proximate and the ideal, on which allegory depends, is alien to myth.[3] Consequently allegory cannot succeed in "translating" meaning forward from the ancient mythical world into "equivalent" categories which are inoffensive to current scientific analyses. What it more truly does is to push backward in time a categorical discrimination which destroys myth by invalidating its peculiar grasp of being.

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[1] "Without the correspondence myth could not provide anything of value" (James Barr, "The Meaning of 'Mythology' in Relation to the Old Testament," Vetus Testamentum, Vol. IX, No. 1 [1959], p. 7). It is here that Cassirer locates the "specific difference between myth and art. . . In mythical imagination there is always implied an act of belief. Without the belief in the reality of its object, myth would lose its power" (Essay . . ., p. 75).

[2] Cf. Bronislaw Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays, comp. Robert Redfield (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1948), pp. 78-79. Again, as Richardson observes, this sort of conceptualization remains within the experience of modern men, at least some of whom continue to be "mythopoeic." But note well this statement: "Like all myths, ancient and modern, these too [e.g. the classless society] have a self-realizing efficacy; it is not necessary that they should be true, but only that people should believe them. Then they will begin to come true" (SJT, IX, 1, p. 36).

[3] "Blickt man dagegen auf den Mythos selbst hin, auf das was er ist und als was er selbst sich weiss, so erkennt man, dass gerade diese Trennung des Ideellen vom Reellen, diese Scheidung zwischen einer Welt des unmittelbaren Seins und einer Welt der mittelbaren Bedeutung, dieser Gegensatz von 'Bild' und 'Sache,' ihm fremd ist. Erst wir, die Zuschauer, die in ihm nicht mehr leben und sind, sondern die ihm bloss reflektierend gegenüberstehen, legen sie in ihn hinein" (Cassirer, Mythische Denken . . ., p. 51).

Religion and Agriculture

Given the sense of "a mystical solidarity between man and plant life,"[1] there are certain mythical correspondences which seem naturally to arise within an agricultural economy. One is a complex of equivalencies centered on field/woman, and including furrow/vulva, plow/phallus, and rain/sowing/insemination.[2] The Egyptian sage, Ptah-hotep, instructs his son and successor to "love thy wife at home as is fitting. . . . She is a profitable field for her lord."[3] In much more specific language, a Sumerian text records an exchange in which the goddess Inanna asks who will plow her vulva, and is assured: "Lady, the king will plow it for you."[1] In the Amarna letters, Rib-Addi, the prince of Byblos, writes: "Mein Feld ist einer Frau, welche ohne Ga[t]ten ist."[2] A seal from the Cassite epoch depicts a plowing and sowing scene, and above it, according to Alfred Jeremias, "die Symbole der Zeugung."[3]

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[1] Mircea Eliade, "Structures and Changes in the History of Religions," City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Cultural Development in the Ancient Near East, ed. Carl H. Kraeling and Robert M. Adams (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 359.

[2] Cf. W. E. Mühlmann, "Ackerbau und Religion," Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Kurt Galling et al. (3rd ed. rev.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1957), I, col. 85. See also Eliade, Traité d'histoire des religions (Paris: Payot, 1948), pp. 226-27; and G. van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation, trans. J. E. Turner and ed. Hans H. Penner (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), Vol. I, pp. 95-96.

[3] James B. Pritchard (ed.), Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (2nd ed. rev.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), p. 413b.

The above citations obviously are of unequal worth. It is not in any case asserted that they point to a kind of generic "agricultural religion"; that would represent the sort of conceptual Realism which this study seeks to avoid.[4] For such a supposition all too easily becomes a part of one's documentation, instead of being induced from it.

Another commonly alleged agricultural motif, for example, is the practice of popular ritual mating on various occasions, usually having to do with themes of reinvigoration or renewal.[5] Theodor Gaster has argued that the *hieros gamos* allegedly performed by ancient Near Eastern kings "merely 'typified' that ritual mass-mating in which whole communities so commonly indulge at harvest festivals in order to promote fertility."[1] Where, however, is the textual evidence to be found that such ritual mating ever occurred in the ancient Near East? The present investigator has encountered no text which lends itself readily to such an interpretation, except perhaps on the part of those who begin by assuming that popular ritual copulation is a more or less universal feature of "agricultural religion."[2]

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[1] Samuel Noah Kramer, "The Sumerian Sacred Marriage Texts," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. CVII, No. 6 (1963), p. 506.

[2] J. A. Knudtzon, (ed.), *Die El-Amarna-Tafeln* (Aalen: Otto Zeller Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964), Vol. I, No. 74:17f., p. 375.

[3] *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur* (2nd ed. rev.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1929), p. 387, pl. 214.

[4] "Infolge der unendlichen Abwandlungs-, Veranderungs-, Kontaminations- und Substitutionsfähigkeit mythischer Motive und ritueller Handlungsabläufe ist es nicht mögliche, eine 'agrarisches Weltbild' als geschlossene Einheit aufzustellen. Zu bedenken ist auch die Lückenhaftigkeit unserer Informationen, die uns meist nur--isoliert kaum deutbar--mythische Fragmente sowie einzelne herausgegriffene agrarische Bräuche bieten, dagegen nur selten komplette rituelle Handlungsabläufe *samt* dem mythisch-geistfgen Hintergrund" (Mühlmann, *RGG*^{3}, I, col. 86).

[5] Cf. Eliade, *Traité . . .*, pp. 303-306. Yet though the instances cited range throughout the known world of the anthropologists, and up into modern times, there is no reference to any such manifestation in an ancient Near Eastern culture.

Myth and Ritual

What one does commonly encounter in ancient Near Eastern cultures is the phenomenon of temple-related concubinage. In Egypt, Amon had a harem, but whether its services were available to human devotees is disputed.[3] In Palestine, it seems clear that the *qᵉdešîm* and *qᵉdešôt* were humanly accessible, whereas it is their precise relationship (if any) to Baal and to Yahweh which continues to be argued.[4] In Mesopotamia, it appears possible that one class of hierodules served as divine consorts, while another made themselves available to local citizens and travelers.[1] In short, with regard to this particular cultic component, the correspondence between the divine and the human spheres of activity is not self-evidently uniform.

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[1] Gaster, "Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East: A Review Article," *The Review of Religion*, Vol. IX, No. 3 (1945), p. 270.

[2] Gaster, himself a folklorist of great gifts, also fails to cite a single ancient Near Eastern occurrence in a section devoted to mass mating in *Thespis*, p. 41. See below, however, p. 230, n. 1.

[3] "Je ne puis croire, avec Maspero, qu'elles constitutaient 'un college de courtisanes sacrées semblable à ceux de la Phénicie, de la Syrie et de la Chaldée'" (Gustave Lefebvre, *Histoire des grands prêtres d'Amon de Karnak jusqu'à la XXI^{e} dynastie* [Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Guethner, 1929], p. 35)

[4] See below, pp. 178, n. 3; 224-28.

This correspondence is conventionally discussed under the heading of "the relation between myth and ritual." If the foregoing interpretation of "mythical thought" is accepted, then this statement of the issue needs to be guarded against any notion of absolute distinction. Such an understanding would lead backward to an era when myth was approached on a literary rather than on a functional plane.[2]

The interpenetration of myth and ritual is among the insights to be derived from the work of W. Robertson Smith, who nevertheless saw ritual as primary, and myth as its offshoot.[3] This postulate has continued to win support among more recent anthropologists,[4] and still maintains its currency,[1] attracting criticism primarily on the charge that it is simplistic.[2]

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[1] See Svend Aage Pallis, The Antiquity of Iraq: A Handbook of Assyriology (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, Ltd., 1956), p. 682.

[2] Clyde Kluckhohn ("Myths and Rituals: A General Theory," The Harvard Theological Review, Vol. XXXV, No. 1 [1942], pp. 45-46), describes the successive interpretations of myth as symbolic descriptions of natural phenomena, as primitive scientific theory, and as the expression of "group phantasy." Cf. Gaster, "Myth and Story," Numen, Vol. I, Fasc. 3, (1954), pp. 184-85.

[3] "It may be affirmed with confidence that in almost every case the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth" (W. Robertson Smith, Lectures on the Religion of the Semites: The Fundamental Institutions, ed. Stanley A. Cook [3rd ed. rev.; London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1927], p. 18). Cf. Cook's reaffirmation, pp. 500-503.

[4] "The uniformity of many such rituals over large areas and the

A considerably more sophisticated analysis presently commands the center of the field. It is exemplified generally in the work of Mircea Eliade, and more specifically for the areas of this study in that of Theodor Gaster. In both, the essential coherence of myth and ritual is expressed through the category of time.

Historical time and mythical time, says Eliade, coincide in the perception of the archaic mentality. Every meaningful occurrence is received as an interruption of mere duration; only that which is paradigmatic (myth) truly "happens" (history).[3] Myth is the history of an

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diversity of mythological explanations show clearly that the ritual itself is the stimulus for the origin of the myth. . . . The ritual existed, and the tale originated from the desire to account for it" (Franz Boas, "Mythology and Folklore," General Anthropology, ed. Boas [Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1938], p. 617).

[1] E. O. James reasons that "ritual techniques" are called forth by "practical" needs, and tend to persist in time and space, while "the meanings attached to them" more commonly suffer modification ("The Influence of Folklore on the History of Religion," Numen, Vol. IX, Fasc. 1 [1962], pp. 3, 7-8).

[2] Kluckhohn comments: "While this suggestion of the primacy of ritual over myth is probably a valid statistical induction and a proper statement of the modal tendency of our evidence, it is, it seems to me, as objectionably a simply unitary explanation (if pressed too far) as the generally rejected nineteenth century views" (HTR, XXXV, 1, p. 50).

[3] "L'histoire, dans la perspective de la mentalité primitive, coincide avec le mythe: tout événement (toute conjoncture pourvue d'un sens), par le fait même qu'il s'est produit dans le temps, représente une rupture de la durée profane et une invasion du Grand Temps" (Traité . . ., p. 338).

event at the point of its ontological origin;[1] ritual is the re-presentation of that event in the midst of ordinary time.[2] With regard to the specific subject of this study, the mythical hierogamy is reproduced in the king's ritual conjugal union.[3]

Gaster's general position differs primarily in terminology. He agrees that myth and ritual are aspects of the same reality.[4] Ritual occurs on the "punctual" plane; myth is its parallel and equivalent expression on the "durative" plane.[5] The "punctual" actions of the king are "transmuted," by means of myth, into the "durative" actions of the god, and these in turn come to be viewed as primordial. The periodic ritual representations of these durative/primordial actions emerge on the punctual plane in the form of drama.[1] Finally, this scheme is specifically characteristic of the *hieros gamos*.[2]

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[1] "The myth, then, is the history of what took place _in illo tempore_, the recital of what the gods or the semidivine beings did at the beginning of time. To tell a myth is to proclaim what happened _ab origine_. Once told, that is, revealed, the myth becomes apodictic truth; it establishes a truth that is absolute" (_The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion_, trans. Willard R. Trask [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961], p. 95).

[2] "The religious festival is the reactualization of a primordial event, of a sacred history in which the actors are the gods or semidivine beings. But sacred history is recounted in the myths. Hence the participants in the festival become contemporaries of the gods and the semidivine beings. They live in the primordial time that is sanctified by the presence and activity of the gods" (_ibid._, p. 105).

[3] "The entire Paleo-Oriental symbolism of marriage can be explained through celestial models. The Sumerians celebrated the union of the elements on the day of the New Year; throughout the ancient East, the same day receives its luster not only from the myth of the hierogamy but also from the rites of the king's union with the goddess" (_Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return_, trans. Willard R. Trask [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959], p. 23).

[4] "_Au fond_, therefore, Myth is cosubstantial with Ritual. They are not--as is often supposed--_two_ things artificially or schematically brought into relationship with each other, but _one_ thing viewed from two different angles or through two different prisms" (_Numen_, I, 3, p. 187).

[5] _Thespis_, p. 17.

The very intricacy of the foregoing analyses needs to be singled out as a factor limiting their usefulness. The present writer thought of them at once when he came upon Alexander Goldenweiser's reference to a "theory of probability": "The probability that a hypothetical structure will tally with historic reality decreases at a tremendous rate with the complexity of the structure."[3] *A priori*, such a reservation appears eminently reasonable when the data and the theorists are separated not only by at least two millennia, but also by the very differences in mentality which they are attempting to delineate.

The essence in both analyses is the primordial/eternal activity of the gods, which resides in the myth and periodically penetrates the temporal sphere in the form of ritual. Though this connection has been criticized as being without specific support in the texts which most intimately affect this study,[1] there is some evidence which would seem to warrant consideration. Eliade mentions the recital of the *Enûma Eliš* at the Babylonian New Year Festival,[2] and the incantation against toothache which proceeds from Anu's creation of the worm to the anger of Ea and Shamash at its request that it be allowed to eat human teeth.[3] For Egypt, one might allude to a ritual for the dedication of a pyramid, assimilating it to the primeval hillock.[4] More tentatively, there is a possible connection between the act of creation by Atum through onanism and a title (and office?) borne by the high-priestess of Amon.[5] Still more problematically, one might refer to the Hebrew hallowing of the Sabbath[6] and the celebration of the Passover[7] as instances of ritual representation of mythical actions.

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[1] *Thespis*, pp. 17-18.

[2] "When the king performed the ritual act of connubium . . . this was translated in the accompanying myth into the nuptials of a god and goddess" (*ibid.*, pp. 78-79).

[3] "Diffusionism and the American School of Historical Ethnology," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1 (1925), p. 25.

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[1] "This synthesis has its merits. Nevertheless, it also has its dangers, for nowhere do the ancient writers describe this mechanism of transposition" (R. de Langhe, "Myth, Ritual, and Kingship in the Ras Shamra Tablets," *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship: Essays on the Theory and Practice of Kingship in the Ancient Near East and in Israel*, ed. S. H. Hooke, [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1958], p. 134).

[2] *Cosmos and History*, pp. 55-58. Cf. *ANET*, p. 332b, 280.

[3] *Sacred and Profane*, pp. 84-85. Cf. *ANET*, pp. 100b-101a.

[4] "O Atum-Khepner, thou wast on high on the (primeval) hill. . . . (So also), O Atum, put thou thy arms about King Nefer-ka-Re, about this construction work, about this pyramid" (*ANET*, p. 3a).

[5] See below, pp. 143-44.

[6] Ex. 20:8-11.

[7] Ex. 12:24-27.

Even if it is granted, however, that these are valid illustrations of the principle of correspondence, and that still others might be adduced, the crucial question remains to be raised. It is, namely, whether such data would warrant the assumption that myth and ritual will universally or even commonly be found in such a coordinate relationship. If this assumption is adopted, then in cases where only myths are extant, one is justified in positing an accompanying ritual action.[1] Such a procedure seems extremely dubious, since it assumes as an interpretative standard the very principle which the texts should first be called upon to demonstrate.

In 1954, Gaster offered a clarification of his thesis which in fact appears to be a radical modification of the claim being considered. He denied having taken the position that the texts analyzed in Thespis had all been acted out dramatically. Rather, he asserted, his position is that "a certain type of story is au fond a literary (or, more neutrally, a verbal) expression of the same situation as is expressed 'behavioristically' in ritual, and that the two things therefore run parallel."[2] The present writer submits that this statement does in fact lack any claim to a general ontological coordination of myth and ritual, and that such a correspondence ought to be posited only when it is at least implied in the particular texts at hand.

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[1] This is precisely the predicament vis-a-vis the Ras Shamra texts, and these form the primary context of the criticism mentioned above, p. 13, n. 1.

[2] Numen, I, 3, p. 211. He continues: "In short, what we are discussing is a parallelism not between an actual recitation and an actual performance, but between a pattern of narrative and a pattern of ritual, or--to put it more broadly--the ultimate relation of a genre of literature to a genre of ceremony" (ibid.).

Diffusionism and Patternism

The myth and ritual "pattern" which is here being assessed is alleged to have sustained itself over a very considerable geographical and chronological range, and so to have occurred in several distinct though interrelated cultures. The existence of such cultural parallels has long been agreed upon, but the proper method of accounting for them remains moot. The hypothesis of a "law" of uniform evolution has been almost entirely abandoned,[1] to be replaced largely by the hypothesis of diffusion through culture contact. The latter analysis begins from the assumption that man's inventive capacities are limited.[2] It presupposes historical contact for very far-flung areas, and requires a high degree of stability for culture traits, as well as the capacity to remain relatively fixed in particular constellations in the midst of travel from one culture to another.[3]

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[1] Boas presents the case against the evolutionary point of view with regard to cultural development in "The Methods of Ethnology," The American Anthropologist, N.S., Vol. XXII, No. 4 (1920), pp. 311-12.

[2] Goldenweiser, AJS, XXXI, 1, p. 21. The diffusionist view is carefully traced and largely rejected in this article.

[3] Boas, AA, N.S., XXII, 4, p. 312. The author agrees to the hypothesis, within very carefully formulated limits. See below, p. 18, n. 1.

Diffusionism received thoroughgoing expression in the work of two English scholars, G. Elliot Smith and W. J. Perry,[1] who identified Egypt as the sole birthplace of "civilisation."[2] It was thereupon spread across the face of the earth, among "simple savages" with no culture of their own,[3] by expeditions in search of the divine substance we know as gold.[4]

The diffusion of Diffusionism can, in this instance at least, be demonstrated beyond question. Among those working with Smith and Perry were A. M. Hocart and S. H. Hooke.[5] Hocart found diffusionism fully confirmed in a study of "Divine Kingship."[6] Hooke, a self-confessed

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[1] A bibliography of their principal expositions of the hypothesis is contained in S. G. F. Brandon, "The Myth and Ritual Position Critically Considered," MRAK, p. 265, n. 1.

[2] "Civilisation was growing and flourishing in Predynastic Egypt at least five centuries before the earliest evidence revealed in Sumer. Moreover, in addition to the unassailable testimony of chronology, it can be demonstrated, as the following pages will show, that the peculiar form early civilisation assumed, not only in Egypt but in every part of the world, was determined in large measure by the practice of mummification on the banks of the Nile in the middle of the fourth millennium B.C." (G. Elliot Smith, Human History [New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1929], p. 252).

[3] "In the first section of the book a large amount of space has been devoted to the consideration of the evidence that goes to establish the truth of the fact that Natural Man did, and still does, exist--totally devoid of any of the customs, beliefs, arts and crafts, social and political organisation of civilisation--and that originally such primitive men were decent, generous and peaceful" (ibid., p. xviii).

[4] Ibid., p. 302.

[5] So Hooke reports in his opening essay, "Myth and Ritual: Past and Present," MRAK, p. 1.

[6] "This investigation can have little use unless sooner or later we make up our minds whether all the forms that will come under review have a common origin or not; ultimately we shall, I think, be driven to the

"deviationist" from the pan-Egyptian tendency of the group, "had reached the belief that Babylonian influence on the Semitic-speaking countries of the ancient Near East was more evident than Egyptian."[1]

The "myth and ritual pattern" which emerged from Hooke's work will be treated in the next section. There remain to be discussed here two theoretical considerations regarding diffusionism as a way of accounting for cultural parallels.

One is the relative status of diffusionism vis-a-vis independent development. In a reply to G. Elliot Smith, Goldenweiser observed that whereas diffusionism is demonstrable (where it validly applies), the assertion of independent development requires "proving the negative," i. e., that diffusion has not occurred. The claim that diffusion may have occurred is "unanswerable." [Such a claim, it needs to be remarked, in no way constitutes evidence of diffusion, to say nothing of proof!] Goldenweiser concludes that such a procedure is "methodologically impossible," and that "independent development must be assumed until diffusion is proved, or, at least, made overwhelmingly probable."[2] It is worth mentioning that the same assertion had been made by Franz Boas twenty years earlier, in an article defending the sober application of

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conclusion that they have" (Kingship [London: Oxford University Press, 1927], pp. 1-2).

[1] MRAK, p. 2.

[2] "Diffusion vs. Independent Origin: A Rejoinder to Professor G. Elliot Smith," Science, N.S., Vol. XLIV, No. 1137 (1916), pp. 532-33.

the diffusionist hypothesis in anthropology. He appended qualifications which would seem to have lost none of their force or relevance.[1]

A second and equally problematic feature of diffusionism is its underlying assumption that "similarities are generic." The same presupposition was the basis of the earlier evolutionary hypothesis; it was this bias, according to Henri Frankfort, which distorted Frazer's understanding of the vast body of data which he had gathered. "The belief that differences are specific and similarities generic vitiates one's very approach to the evidence."[2] Hooke's reply to this contention could hardly be more revealing! He wrote:

> The question of the relative importance of differences and similarities will be answered differently according to the point of view of the answerer [*sic!*],, but it still remains true that differences arise from prior similarities; the genus comes before the species, and the species is defined by its differences within the larger circle of the genus. . . . Every logician would agree, as against Frankfort, that similarities are generic and differences specific.[3]

The foregoing statement clearly supports the charge that diffusionism remains methodologically indebted to the evolutionary thesis it has supposedly repudiated ("the genus comes before the species"). What is still more significant is that Frankfort's charge is answered on the grounds of formal logic. It is on the level of this assumption--that human cultural patterns may be expected to conform to the rules of "word games"--that the diffusionist/patternist approach opens itself to a robust methodological skepticism.

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[1] "The investigation must always demand continuity of distribution as one of the essential conditions for proving historical connection, and the assumption of lost connecting links must be applied most sparingly" ("The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology," Science, N.S., Vol. IV, No. 103,[1896], p. 906).

[2] *The Problem of Similarity in Ancient Near Eastern Religions* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 6.

[3] *MRAK*, p. 7.

The supposition that "similarities are generic" has expressed itself among anthropologists and folklorists in the concept of "motifs."[1] This word, which often refers in actual use to cultural parallels, frequently seems to be employed in the sense of "guiding or controlling idea," with the suggestion that such ideas transcend the passing of religions, cultures, and eras.[2] The methodological circle is complete when beliefs and practices apparently separated by imposing barriers of time, space, and cultural sophistication are manipulated so as to interpret one another. The "motif" has then assumed a kind of timeless and spaceless quality, lending it a universal applicability.[1]

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[1] Cf. Stith Thompson (ed.), Motif-Index of Folk-Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books and Local Legends (6 vols.; Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1955). This collection is in fact subtly but discernibly founded on diffusionist assumptions. Thompson claims, to be sure, that his listing "is in itself quite uncritical of the materials involved" (Vol. I, p. 11). Note, however, that motifs are defined as "those details out of which full-fledged narratives are composed" (ibid., p. 10), and which are "found worth retaining when tale, ballad, jest, or myth is transmitted by word of mouth or on the written page from generation to generation or from land to land" (ibid., p. 19).

[2] "The basic themes and cultic patterns in oral tradition, documentary texts, tales and legends, myth and ritual, sacred drama and dance, have been preserved, evaluated and carried on from age to age, culture to culture, religion to religion (James, Numen, IX, 1, p. 15).

The effect of this approach to the interpretation of parallels is strikingly illustrated (of all places!) in the youthful work of W. F. Albright. He identified Joseph as a fertility god with a sanctuary at Shechem, and interpreted his imprisonment in the _bôr_ in terms of Tammuz' descent into the netherworld. Then, having paid tribute to the labors of Frazer and Baudissin, he asserted that "from a comparison of the myths" of such fertility gods as Tammuz, Gilgamesh, Enkidu, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, and Bitis, "_we know what to expect_" [underlining mine] with regard to Joseph.[2]

It is precisely this sort of "knowing what to expect" which brands the diffusionist/patternist approach to cultural parallels as fundamentally deductive, and therefore--in the logical sense of the word--

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[1] Gaster charges that "we blithely squeeze the practices of Assyrian, Canaanite, and Hittite into patterns derived from observation of Hottentot, Blackfoot, and Bantu" (_Review of Religion_, IX, 3, p. 267). It is difficult to see that Gaster's own _Thespis_ escapes the force of this charge. See, for example, pp. 27-28, 29-30, 33, 35-36, and _passim_. Note also the implications of the "Conspectus of Motifs" offered on pp. 150-51, and of the "Index of Motifs" and "Cross-Index," according to the Stith Thompson _Motif-Index . . ._, on pp. 497-99.

[2] "Historical and Mythical Elements in the Story of Joseph," _The Journal of Biblical Literature_, Vol. XXXVII (1918), p. 115. The nature of these assertions made it seem likely that a specific qualification of this position could be found among Albright's later writings. A brief search was rewarded with the following statement: "This study needs extensive revision today, partly on the basis of further parallel material and partly by way of a more sober and critical treatment of the historical nuclei of the cycles in question" (_FSAC_, p. 67, n. 41).

presumptuous. The nature of the problem would seem rather to require that such comparisons be restricted to inductive methods, beginning from E. R. Goodenough's reminder that "parallels are lines which never meet."[1] Such sobriety should be deepened by the realization that the very act of isolating parallels for study is itself fraught with uncertainty.[2]

It is, after all, not form but meaning which is ultimately crucial. In linguistics it is often relatively easy to trace an evolving form back to its root. One ought not to assume, however, that the intent of the original root is necessarily instructive about the meaning of the descendent form. Such an assumption continues to operate, to be sure; but happily it is coming under increasingly vigorous attack.[3]

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[1] "New Light on Hellenistic Judaism," Journal of Bible and Religion, Vol. V (1937), p. 18. Quoted in Beatrice Goff, "Syncretism in the Religion of Israel," JBL, Vol. LVIII, Part 2 (1939), p. 157.

[2] "Even in the domain of material culture it is not always easy to say just how similar two objects are or how significant the similarity; as to spiritual and social matters, who is there who would pass final judgment on the degree of comparability of two features in religion, social organization, or art? All those who have had experience in these matters know the difficulties confronting the unbiased student of cultural analogies" (Goldenweiser, AJS, XXXI, 1, p. 22).

[3] "Biblical handbooks are cluttered with false etymologies, as well as with correct etymologies from which erroneous or undemonstrable deductions have been made. Actually, no competent lexicographer in any language fixes the precise meaning of a word by its etymology but rather by collecting as many passages where the word occurs as possible or practicable and by listing all meanings and shades of meaning in them. Words change their meaning through use to such an extent that the etymological method of fixing significance is only employed as a last resort, where other evidence is inadequate" (FSAC, p. 46). See also James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 107-14.

In the sphere of mythological and cultic parallels, by the same token, one may demonstrate both essential similarity in form and historical dependence in evolution, without thereby having proved congruity of signification.[1] Such complexes may change their meaning almost completely,[2] may be adopted as literary conventions,[3] and may persist in form long after virtually all specific content has been lost.[4]

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[1] "If an expression, an image, or a particular idea, etc. is found in two different places, in two civilizations and religions, it does not follow that they mean the same, even if there is a direct historical loan or influence from one of the sides" (Sigmund Mowinckel, "General Oriental and Specific Israelite Elements in the Israelite Conception of the Sacral Kingdom," The Sacral Kingship: Contributions to the Central Theme of the VIIIth International Congress for the History of Religions [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959], p. 288). The same contention is put forward by J. de Fraine: "Mais il faut toujours se souvenir qu'une identité de formules, voire de 'motifs' phénoménologiques, peut masquer une dissemblance rélativement prononcée au sujet des croyances religieuses" ("Les implications du 'Patternism'," Biblica, Vol. XXXVII, Fasc. 1 [1956], p. 61).

[2] Frankfort observes, for example, that "it needs an effort . . . to realize that the Isis worshipped throughout the Roman Empire shared little more than her name with the goddess of Ancient Egypt. . . . For the appeal of religious symbols is not dependent upon a correct understanding of their original meaning. Once created, their lasting forms challenge the imagination; they may be charged with a new significance which they themselves called forth, and may stimulate a new integration in alien surroundings" (The Problem . . . , p. 22).

[3] "If, for example, the turbulent waters may be represented in a cultic drama by the figure of a rebellious 'Sir Sea,' the simple phrase 'the rebel sea' may convey the same notion in poetic speech, and there is no reason to assume . . . that the word 'sea' should be mentally capitalized and taken to refer directly to the dramatic personage" (Gaster, Review of Studies in the Book of Nahum, by Alfred Haldar, JBL, Vol. LXVIII, Part 2 [1949], p. 170).

[4] "Wenn man uns heute nachweist, dass die Sitte, beim Begräbnis drei Hände voll Erde auf den Sarg zu werfen, ursprünglich apotropäischen Sinn gehabt hat, so ist dies eine recht interessante Erklärung der

The Myth and Ritual Pattern

The foregoing considerations become all the more critical when "parallels" are grouped into a "pattern." If the pattern is deduced from correspondences in form, without sufficient regard for correlation in meaning, then the resulting construct is likely to be artificial in its design, and misleading in its implications.

The design orginally conceived by a group of British scholars gathered around S. H. Hooke was delineated by the latter as follows:

> The annual festival which was the centre and climax of all the religious activities of the year contained the following elements:
>
> (a) The dramatic representation of the death and resurrection of the god.
> (b) The recitation or symbolic representation of the myth of creation.
> (c) The ritual combat, in which the triumph of the god over his enemies was depicted.
> (d) The sacred marriage.
> (e) The triumphal procession, in which the king played the part of the god followed by a train of lesser gods or visiting deities.
>
> These elements might vary in different localities and at different periods, some being more strongly stressed than others, but they constitute the underlying skeleton, so to speak, not only of such seasonal rituals as the great New Year Festivals, but also of coronation rituals, initiation ceremonies, and may even be discerned in occasional rituals such as spells against demons and various diseases.[1]

Herkunft dieses Brauches, aber auch nicht viel mehr. Denn für uns hat er eben diese ursprüngliche Bedeutung verloren und gilt nur als pietätvolle Handlung, so gewiss wir dem Stadium der Totenbeschwörung entwachsen sind" (Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im Alten Testament: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Geschichte der Psalmenexegese dargestellt und kritisch gewürdigt [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961], pp. 64-65).

[1] "The Myth and Ritual Pattern of the Ancient East," Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to

Two important though somewhat muted methodological claims are implicit here. The first is the notion of an "underlying skeleton," which presymably may be laid bare by stripping away that which has grown up around and concealed it.[1] There is, second, the suggestion that this framework is discernible in all sorts of texts, which superficially might seem to have no connection with large-scale public ceremonial. In short, if we see an arm protruding from the sand, we know at once that careful and earnest excavation will reveal most or all of a body.

This leads then to the consequence that even a fragmentary hint of the "pattern" will suffice to set the diggers to work. Gaster ridicules this kind of activity by applying it to Shakespeare: "Who is Sylvia? What is she, That all our swains commend her?" is "obviously, part of

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the Culture Pattern of the Ancient East, ed. S. H. Hooke (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 8. Gaster, who wishes to be clearly distinguished from this group, nonetheless makes an assertion which sounds remarkably similar: "The Seasonal Pattern may be traced in many of the calendar festivals of the Ancient Near East. Representative instances are the Akitu (New Year) Festival of the Babylonians and Assyrians and the New Year-Day of Atonement-Feast of Ingathering complex of the Israelites. It may be recognized also in Egypt and among the Hittites, and--at least vestigially--in the Asianic mysteries of Attis" (Thespis, p. 18).

[1] This claim is still discernible in Hooke's introductory essay in Myth, Ritual, and Kingship, in which he answers criticisms of the earlier volume. He grants that "culture patterns developed with specific differences characteristic of each of the different areas." But he continues: "In Egypt the peculiar place of the Nile in her economy, and the unique development of ideas about death and the after-life, led to the creation of a religious pattern whose differences have almost submerged those common elements to which I have referred" [underlining mine] (MRAK, p. 10).

the hymeneal of the hieros gamos!"[1] To one who has spent the past year reading about what the diggers claim to have uncovered, such ridicule appears just.

In a more serious fashion and with regard to a more relevant cultural sphere, Karl-Heinz Bernhardt has demonstrated how easily such a questionable methodology can produce misleading results. Tor Irstam, in The King of Ganda,[2] cites 27 separate rites, drawn from 62 African peoples and tribes, relating to the enthronement festival. None of the 62 tribes knew all 27 rites; the highest number of rites practiced by a given tribe is 17, and the average is 10 to 11. On the other hand, none of the 27 ceremonies may be demonstrated among all 62 tribes; the highest number of tribes practicing a given rite is 29!

Nonetheless, Irstam proposes to find the "Near-East Pattern" in these materials. Bernhardt therefore reduces his argument somewhat as follows:

> The Ganda, Nyoro, Shilluk, Limnu, Urmundi, Masai and others practice a "ritual fight." This practice is related to the enthronement festival, and is therefore a part of the "ritual pattern."

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[1] "Sylvia is the goddess of the woods (Latin silva), i. e. Diana who, according to Frazer, was the bride of Dius in the sacred marriage. 'Swains' is a recognized synonym for 'shepherds,' and this, of course, indicates the royal bridegroom, seeing that the king is so often called 'shepherd'" (JBL, LXVIII, 2, p. 172). René Follet uses the same weapon on Gaster himself, showing how by means of the sort of analysis employed in Thespis, one could find a "seasonal ritual pattern" in the Tour de France! "Je plaisante, mais à peine" (Review of Gaster, Thespis, Biblica, Vol. XXXIII, Fasc. 1 [1952], pp. 140-41).

[2] The King of Ganda: Studies in the Institution of Sacral Kingship in Africa, trans. Donald Burton (Lund: H. Ohlssons boktr., 1944), pp. 56 ff. Reported and discussed by Bernhardt in AKAT, pp. 58-59.

> The Wadai, Bornu, Hausa, Bole, Ewe, Temne and others celebrate an enthronement festival; therefore, a "ritual fight" must be practiced among these tribes.

If we had no further information on the second group of tribes, we would be without any defense against such a deduction. In this case, however, as a result of Irstam's own research, we know in fact that no "ritual fight" does exist among them! "Warum, ist nicht ohne weiteres zu sagen, Es ist eben so."[1]

We ought, in short, to be on guard against assuming the practice of a given ritual solely or largely on the basis that it forms part of a "pattern" elsewhere. It is just such an assumption which serves in place of evidence in the following assertion:

> In the original volume of essays the thesis was that certain characteristic ceremonies recur in different lands in Western Asia, sometimes not all in each land, sometimes in different contexts, in a way that forms a "pattern," that is a coherent sequence. Of one of those ceremonies, the sacred marriage, it is certainly true that it formed a part in a sequence, and that though there is no information to prove that it was mentioned in the complete myth of Marduk, there is strong presumption that it was. The similarities of the sacred marriage in its aspect as the marriage of a god to a girl or woman with rituals or institutions in other lands that have been noted confirm the original thesis [underlining mine].[2]

The able and careful author of this statement has, however, felt obligated to introduce a qualification which seems to render his "presumption" largely invalid. He continues: "On the other hand, the evidence does not show that the sacred marriage was invariably part of a calendar

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[1] AKAT, p. 59.

[2] Sidney Smith, "The Practice of Kingship in Early Semitic Kingdoms," MRAK, p. 68.

New Year festival."[1] But if an element is not invariably a part of the pattern, one's right to assume its existence in cases where the texts are silent is certainly radically reduced!

Eigenart and Phenomenology

This study will confine itself, therefore, to that which the texts do record. It may be that the various manifestations of the *hieros gamos* will converge upon a common theme or pattern of themes. If so, then historical diffusion from a single source cannot be ruled out. Yet neither must it necessarily be adopted! Until the mechanisms of borrowing have been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt, the hypothesis of independent development remains tenable.

Such a hypothesis is actually grounded, it would seem, in a qualified evolutionism. Without reference to any supposed *laws* of uniform development, it would nonetheless posit the likelihood of parallel developments in contexts which are psychologically and ecologically similar.[2]

Certain categories of similarity might be enumerated, among the most obvious of which would be natural phenomena,[3] especially seasonal cycles and the human responses they evoke.[1] Human institutions, such as marriage, are circumscribed in their variety of expression by inherent logical and psychological boundaries, as well as by local economic factors.[2] There seem, finally, to be a limited number of themes by which the interrelationships between the human and the numinous spheres may be expressed.[3]

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[1] *MRAK*, p. 68. See below, pp. 55-57.

[2] "Such was the common theology of the ancient Near East . . . That it did develop independently in each [country] is strongly suggested, I think, by the uniformity of the results, which can be explained better by postulating relatively uniform causes, that is, social, psychological and rhetorical patterns, rather than accidents of historical transmission" (Morton Smith, "The Common Theology of the Ancient Near East," *JBL*, Vol. LXXI, Part 3 [1952], p. 146).

[3] Cf. Frankfort, "The Absence of a Pattern in the Religions of the

It is certainly conceivable that similar constellations of these and other categories might occur in different eras and localities, and so produce similar patterns of myth and ritual. The primary attention of this study, in any case, will be focused separately on the occurrences of hierogamy within the several cultures, and only subsequently on the issue of their comparison.

Ancient Near East," Proceedings of the 7th Congress for the History of Religions, ed. C. J. Bleeker, G. W. J. Drewes, and K. A. H. Hidding (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1951), p. 100.

[1] "Frühlings- und Herbstfeste werden nicht deshalb in aller Welt gefeiert, weil irgendwo ein solches Fest zuerst aufgekommen und dann so allmählich über die Kontinente hingewandert ist auf den unkontrollierbaren Pfaden des 'culture spread,' wie Handel, Eroberung und Kolonisation, sondern weil allerwärts Frühling und Herbst, Saat und Ernte, für den Menschen wesentliche Vorgänge in der Natur sind, nicht anders wie Geburt und Tod" (Bernhardt, AKAT, p. 62).

[2] This is an example, says Boas, of "those cases in which a certain problem confronting man may be solved by a limited number of methods only" (AA, N.S., XXII, 4, p. 318).

[3] This appears to be all that Gaster is really willing to claim for his own version of patternism. "When the present writer speaks of a 'seasonal pattern,' he means a broad sequence of mortification, purgation, invigoration and jubilation such as indeed characterises seasonal rites in most parts of the world, and the evidence for which can scarcely be gainsaid by anyone who troubles to collect the data" (Numen, I, 3, pp. 211-12).

Indeed, the present writer will even be very slow to draw generalizing conclusions among the occurrences within a given culture area. In this is reflected his partial dissatisfaction with the classic expressions of the phenomenological approach to religious data. Its freedom from a concern for "origins" and "development" is gratifying.[1] One suspects, however, that this freedom has elsewhere been abandoned when one reads that "there is always one trait which can be called typical for this special religion," and that "there is behind a certain religion a specific attitude of man, a special orientation towards the divine."[2]

In van der Leeuw's terms, then, this study has concentrated on "manifestations," and has been most reluctant to lay claim to the distillation of "essences." This, it must finally be confessed, is because the present writer has not yet been able to satisfy himself that the latter really exist.

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[1] "Thus phenomenology knows nothing of any historical 'development' of religion, still less of an 'origin' of religion. Its perpetual task is to free itself from every non-phenomenological standpoint and to retain its own liberty, while it conserves the inestimable value of this position always anew" (van der Leeuw, _Religion in Essence . . ._, II, p. 688).

[2] Bleeker, "Looking Backward and Forward," _Proceedings_, pp. 85-86. This view is found also in the concluding and culminating chapters of van der Leeuw's great work, in which he categorizes "Religions" and "Founders." Cf. _Religion in Essence . . ._, II, pp. 591-671. The present writer is much more in accord with Wilfred Cantwell Smith's recent manifesto: "Neither religion in general nor any one of the religions, I will contend, is in itself an intelligible entity, a valid object of inquiry or of concern either for the scholar or for the man of faith" (_The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind_ [New York: The New American Library, 1964], p. 16).

CHAPTER II

THE LAND OF THE TWO RIVERS

Altmesopotamische Lebensgefühl

The title of this first section is borrowed from that of an article by F. R. Kraus.[1] He begins by stressing the improbability that the ancient Mesopotamians might all have been characterized by a single attitude toward fundamental issues. In any case, he continues, the possibility of our re-experiencing their mind-set is extremely limited.[2]

The reasons given by other students for emphasizing such a limitation are several. To begin with, the presuppositions of a culture are by their very nature unexpressed. An investigator from another culture must induce them intuitively from the disparate concrete data available to him. The threat of subjectivity in such an approach is neutralized only when the overview thus conceived brings all of the available facts within a new and more clarifying light.[1]

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[1] *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. XIX, No. 2 (1960), pp. 117-32.

[2] "Ist es einerseits undenkbar, dass die Bewohner des alten Zweistromlandes, Sumerer und Akkader, Babylonier und Assyrer, Einheimische und Zugewanderte, Sesshafte und Nomaden, alt und jung, Mann und Frau, hoch und niedrig, Gesunde und Kranke, während, sagen wir, zweitausend Jahren in Glück und Unglück, Krieg und Frieden überall in einunderselben Grundhaltung verharrt hätten, so müssen wir uns andererseits völlig darüber im klaren sein, dass wir nur äusserst geringe Möglichkeiten besitzen, etwas über irgendeine Stimmung dieser Menschen in Erfahrung zu bringen" (*ibid.*, p. 118). His article, nonetheless, seeks to bring forward "Zeugnisse einer zuversichtlicheren Haltung" (*ibid.*) than Thorkild Jacobsen had posited (*Intellectual Adventure*, p. 125).

It has also been noted that the extant sources--literary, epigraphic, and monumental--refer almost wholly to the "official religion." Very little remains to apprise the investigator of the inner nature of individual piety, and the sources do not record, as in the case of Israel, the existence of outstanding personalities who embody the people's religious ideal.[2]

Finally, there is the argument, already advanced in various forms in the preceding chapter,[3] that "the European must relinquish the hope of a complete psychological description of how this entirety [the Babylonian akitu festival] was experienced . . . he lacks the associations and is out of touch with the mode of thought and feeling."[1] In the same vein, Leo Oppenheim speaks of "the problem of comprehension across the barriers of conceptual conditioning." He cites it as a major reason, side by side with "the nature of the available evidence," why "a systematic presentation of Mesopotamian religion cannot and should not be written."[2]

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[1] Martin Noth, "Gott, König, Volk im Alten Testament," *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, ed. Martin Noth (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1957), p. 191.

[2] "A part peut-être les anthroponymes, les scènes représentées sur les cylindre-sceaux et certaines brèves légendes qui les y accompagnent parfois, rien ne nous donne plus acces direct sur la piété des *individus*, et nous ne connaissons même pas, comme en Israël, de ces grandes personnalités qui incarnent l'ideal religieux d'un peuple, bien qu'il nous soit possible d'en soupçonner l'existence et de leur imputer l'approfondissement remarqable que nous enregistrerons de cet ideal" (Jean Bottéro, *La religion Babylonienne* [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952], p. 32). It seems equally possible, however, that the lack of testimony to a prophetic movement may point to the absence of any tension between "individual" and "official" religion. Certainly one has no *a priori* right to suppose that the theophoric names, the widespread commercial use of seals bearing religious motifs, and the abundantly recorded piety of the rulers lacked genuine referents in the convictions and moods of the individuals within the culture.

[3] See above, pp. 2-6.

Such a caution, though frequently asserted, has not prevented Prof. Oppenheim himself from developing some thoroughgoing generalizations of the following sort about Mesopotamian religion:

> The influence of religion on the individual, as well as on the community as a whole, was unimportant in Mesopotamia. No texts tell us that ritual requirements in any stringent way affected the individual's physiological appetities, his psychological preferences, or his attitude toward his possessions or his family. . . . he was simply an onlooker in certain public ceremonies of rejoicing or communal mourning. He lived in a quite tepid religious climate within a framework of socio-economic rather than cultic co-ordinates.[3]

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Prof. Oppenheim has here provided a perfect demonstration of his own contention concerning "our built-in Old and New Testament 'guidance system.'"[4] This is not to dispute the data which he offers--a task for which the present writer fully realizes his incompetence. Allow, then, that the individual's appetites, preferences, and attitudes towards his holdings may even have determined the ritual requirements, instead of being conditioned by them. Allow further that these ritual expressions took place in a communal context, where no individual relationship with the numinous is now discernible by us. Can such religious phenomena only be evaluated as "tepid" and unimportant? Not, it would seem, except by those whose religious moulds have been forged under the blows of such as Amos, Jeremiah, and/or Jesus of Nazareth. Where such moulds are rejected as unfitting, however, the foregoing description might appear as a fair and non-invidious account of the way early Mesopotamian religion now appears to us.

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[1] Svend Aage Pallis, The Babylonian Akitu Festival ("Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab.: Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser," Vol. XII, No. 1; København: Andr. Fred. Høst & Son, 1926), p. 306.

[2] Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 172.

[3] Ibid., p. 176.

[4] See above, p. 2 and nn. 1 , 2.

It would agree, at least, with the formulations of Thorkild Jacobsen, who seems every bit as willing to generalize as Prof. Oppenheim considers himself unwilling to do so. In his most fearless venture in this direction,[1] he depicts the four millennia B.C. as categorized respectively and in ascending order by Famine, the Sword, Guilt, and a Moral Universe.

Fear of Famine directed the earliest religious concerns toward the "powers in and behind" fishing, herding, and agriculture.[2] Fear of the Sword led not only to the development of monarchic institutions, but also the conceptualization of the gods as powers in history as well as in nature.[3] Fear of Guilt was expressed in the incipient concept of a "personal god,"[1] with the result that "Israel came into being in a millennium when the concept of a moral universe had been achieved."[2]

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[1] "Ancient Mesopotamian Religion: The Central Concerns," PAPS, Vol. CVII, No. 6 (1963), pp. 473-84.

[2] Ibid., p. 475.

[3] Ibid., p. 479.

While the reliability of one-word characterizations of millennia seems dubious at best, it nonetheless appears undeniable that at least the first two themes do confront us in the religious remains from Mesopotamia. Both the sense of dependence on natural fertility and the notion of relationship between cosmic order and human political institutions certainly seem to have been experienced religiously.

That the early agriculturists of Sumer must have felt dependent on unseen and unpredictable forces, and that they should seek to ally themselves with these forces,[3] may still be understood from within by any contemporary man, however literate. Let him only retain enough backyard space and the will to plant a few rows of corn. Then in that suspension between sowing and germination, he may participate, however slightly, in an ancient and wordless awe. Again, when a late summer rain has broken a drought which threatened to rob the ears of their promise, his sophisticated cosmology may be pierced anew for an instant by the irresistible feeling that he and his household stand once more under a benevolent sky!

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[1] PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 482.

[2] Ibid., p. 484.

[3] "Quand on envisage l'essence même de la religion sumérienne, celle-ci se manifeste nettement comme un culte de la nature. Les Sumériens ont eu une vénération particulière pour les forces naturelles. Leur religion est une religion de la fertilité et de la fécondité, une religion matérialiste de la nature, c'est-à-dire qu'ils invoquaient leurs dieux en vue de leur bien-être matériel, et ce bien-être terrestre est naturellement l'accroissement des troupeaux, la germination des plantes et des grains qui n'est possible que par la pluie et le soleil" (Louis Vanden Berghe, "Réflexions critiques sur la nature de Dumuzi-Tammuz," La Nouvelle Clio, Vol. VI, Nos. 5-6 [1954], pp. 302-303).

Jacobsen has apparently desired to base his analysis of this mood in ancient Sumer on Rudolph Otto's discussion of "numinous" experience as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*.[1] The Sumerian religious response is described as arising first out of man's attraction toward "the powers confronting him in the sources of his food supply," which thereby "revealed themselves" as "approachable and friendly toward man."[2] In turn, man's worship of these powers, "by such means as cult images, temples, service and the ritual drama," may be seen as endeavors to guarantee their security-bringing "presence."[3]

Since the conditions under which food was obtained were not the same throughout Mesopotamia, these gods differed in character from one region to another, following the variations in human ecology. Jacobsen distinguishes among three major areas, determined by terrain and economy,[4] while Oppenheim divides the land into two broad spheres, judged on the basis of the form in which moisture was available.[1]

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[1] Cf. *PAPS*, CVII, 6, p. 473. Otto's discussion is to be found in his *Das Heilige: Über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationalen* (31. bis 35. Auflage; München: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1963), especially in chaps. 4-6. There is a useful summary statement of the formula's polarities on p. 42.

[2] Jacobsen, "Formative Tendencies in Sumerian Religion," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. George Ernest Wright (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962), p. 271.

[3] Jacobsen, "Babylonia and Assyria: V. Religion," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1964), Vol. II, p. 972.

[4] "From the marshlands of the hunter and fisherman in the south,

That ancient agriculturalists should have experienced the sensation of dependence on forces lying beyond their direct experience and control seems hardly debatable. Debate probably is in order, however, when the interpretation seeks to delve more deeply into the ancient Mesopotamian's religious modalities, and to speak also in terms of "admiration" and "trust."[2]

It is precisely in the *hieros gamos* that Jacobsen professes to discern this "deep inner" feeling, which "comes close to that of salvation, of fulfillment and security." Such a mood, he suggests, is most profoundly expressed in the following marriage text:

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over the grasslands in the center, to the farms in the north and east, each had its own pantheon determined by its particular economy" (*BANE*, p. 271).

[1] "In upper Mesopotamia and in the hilly piedmont east of the Tigris, rain-agriculture was at home, while irrigation-agriculture was practiced on the alluvial soil along the lower course of both rivers, Tigris and Euphrates" ("Assyro-Babylonian Religion," *Forgotten Religions*, ed. Vergilius Ferm [New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950], p. 67). In view of his more recent cautions, the inferences which Prof. Oppenheim was willing to draw in this article are certainly striking. Among others, he asserted that the southern farmer felt the world to be "harmonious" and "philanthropic," and that his priest and/or ruler lived in a "very intimate" relationship with the deity. In the north, contrariwise, the god was "irritable"; yet though the relations between him and the group were sometimes "tense" and "hectic," they were also "emotionally more sincere (on both sides)" (*ibid.*).

[2] "Tout compte fait, il faut convenir que malgré les interets purement terre à terre et d'ordinaire assez egoïstes qu'elle trahit, la prière des Babyloniens plus encore que leur culte d' "entretien" des dieux, nous manifeste une authentique intensité des sentiments de dépendance, d'admiration et de confiance envers le monde divin, si toute tendance "mystique" en est absente" (Bottéro, *La religion . . .*, p. 124).

Let them join (?) his hand in my hand,
Let them join (?) his heart to my heart,
Sweet is it to sleep hand in hand with him,
And equally good the loveliness of joining heart to heart.[1]

However, "in most of the other expressions of the feeling that we have it tends to shrink imperceptibly from bliss, full inner and outer security towards the more narrow compass of material security." This more limited attitude presents itself, for example, in a wooing scene, in which Inanna responds:

I want to! It is the man of my heart, the man of my
  heart, the man my heart did speak of:
He who wields the hoe, heaps up piles of grain,
Who brings the grain to the barn,
The farmer of many, many grain piles,
The shepherd of the storehouse full of wool![2]

Though Jacobsen himself seems to feel that the latter statement represents "a withdrawal and impoverishment of the experience," he is emphatic that it must be viewed as "a withdrawal in the direction of the center, of the origins of the feeling." The Sacred Marriage was clearly a harvest rite, he adds, and therefore whatever "bliss" it induced was firmly rooted in that sense of material security which is derived from the assurance of a plentiful food supply.[3]

This whole quest for varieties and degrees of Abhängigkeitsgefühl in the Sumerian religious mood is both unconvincing and, from a methodological standpoint, disquieting.[1] In general, it seems extremely doubtful that the ancient worshippers either perceived or conceived any such distinction as has been suggested between "inner security" and "material security."[2] More specifically, it is hard to see how the words of Inanna, in the former of the two texts quoted above, will bear the conceptual load which Jacobsen wishes to place upon them. Her delight, after all, refers to the anticipated joys of sexual intercourse and their aftermath. Most other texts of this sort are much more physically or materially descriptive. It would therefore seem necessary to add considerably to this evidence before a convincing case might be made for the position that phrases such as "hand in hand" and "heart to heart" bespeak a feeling which "comes close to that of salvation."

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[1] "Toward the Image of Tammuz," History of Religions, Vol. I, No. 2 (1962), p. 195.

[2] Ibid., p. 196.

[3] Ibid., pp. 196-97.

What can be agreed upon, however, is the expression in the Sacred Marriage texts of the mood of dependence on the divine powers for material sustenance. It will be necessary later to return in more detail to this relationship.[3] Now, before taking up the major textual references to the hieros gamos in order and in detail, it seems relevant to give at least brief consideration to the other major theme proposed by Prof. Jacobsen.

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[1] One is inclined to suppose that this quest is rooted in Otto's argument, as against Schleiermacher, that the sense of religious (*frommer*) dependence must be qualitatively distinguished from all "natural" feelings of this sort (*Das Heilige*, pp. 9-10). The perennial danger of all such conceptualizations--and the danger increases in proportion to their brilliance--is the temptation to eisegesis on the part of those who subsequently seek to apply the concepts to a body of data from which they were not originally induced.

[2] The consummation of the *hieros gamos* was celebrated with a lavish banquet, in which the secure feeling of a stomach full of viands and beer was enveloped in the communal confidence that a hopeful destiny had been reassured. See below, p. 54.

[3] See below, pp. 86 ff.

To the early Sumerian identification of the "numinous" in experiences of food gathering and production, he suggests, there was later added an enlarged understanding of the numinous drawn from the development of social institutions.[1] Specifically, it is "the growth of the human unit beyond the village" which produces this effect: the gods are no longer forces in nature, but have also taken on the lineaments of earthly rulers.[2] Otto is still to serve as the guide, it seems: the mysterium, which in the sources of the food supply was felt as fascinans, manifests itself in the divine Assembly as tremendum.[3]

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[1] He speaks of "the two major psychological tendencies which seem to us to structure the Sumerian response: namely, (1) an early spontaneous reliance upon features and values of the situations in which man experienced the numinous for guidance to its nature and approachability, and (2) a later similarly spontaneous reliance upon social forms and attitudes taken from the developing human society as vehicles for further understanding and approach" (BANE, pp. 267-68).

[2] "Political Institutions, Literature and Religion," City Invincible, ed. Kraeling and Adams, p. 67. Cf. S. N. Kramer's concurring observation that "on analogy with the political organization of the human state, . . . the Sumerian pantheon was therefore conceived as functioning as an assembly with a king at its head (History Begins at Sumer [Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959], p. 79).

[3] "The social differentiation--and perhaps only social differentiation--first makes possible some grasp of the distance, the majestas, of the divine" (Jacobsen, ibid.). Cf. Otto, Das Heilige, pp. 22-23. For illustrative texts, see Jacobsen, Intellectual Adventure, pp. 140, 178. Here, it seems to the present writer, the texts do indeed speak in the tone attributed to them.

In any case, what is especially of interest in this alleged twofold development is its reputed reflection in the New Year festival at Babylon. On this interpretation there were, in the *hieros gamos* and certain other elements in the celebration, "remains of the primitive agricultural civilization." In contrast, an "urban mode of thought" may be detected in some of the later components of the festival.[1] The "determination of destiny" may originally have been simply and directly a result of the union of god and goddess. Then, "dus à la transposition urbaine de l'ancienne fête agricole," the destinies come to be determined through the solemn assembly of the gods.[2] One comes then, finally, upon a pointed reference to the distinction between "the urban Mesopotamian rites" and the "agricultural Ras Shamra rites."[3]

Henri Frankfort, however, has been at some pains to argue that "from the middle of the fourth to the middle of the first millennium B.C. . . . urban life in no way diminished man's awareness of his essential involvement in nature."[4] He makes a rather impressive case.

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[1] Pallis, *BAF*, p. 304.

[2] René Labat, *Le caractère religieux de la royauté Assyro-Babylonienne* (Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1939), p. 167. He gives credit, however, to Pallis (*ibid.*) for "la distinction des éléments agricoles et des éléments urbains" (*ibid.*, n. 96). Cf. also Georges Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd., 1954), pp. 285-86, where the same position is taken.

[3] Norman Snaith, *The Jewish New Year Festival: Its Origins and Development* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1947), p. 207.

[4] *Intellectual Adventure*, p. 364.

"Ancient cities were small by our standards."[1] In them, the townspeople often continued to till their own plots of land, while "a recurring sequence of religious festivals [governed by a lunar calendar] interrupted all business and routine at frequent intervals."[2] In short, the urban-versus-agricultural contrast is misleading; the radical distinction between city and countryside, as we know it, is a product of the Industrial Revolution.[3]

What matters more especially to this study, at any rate, is that down into Assyrian times there did continue to be celebrated that rite to which attention is now directed.

The Celebrations of the Hieros Gamos

Literature and incidence

It should be noted at once that no claim is made here to offer a "history" of the Sacred Marriage, or to sketch its "development." It seems unlikely that the extant data would permit such a reconstruction. In any case, the present writer's acquaintance with the materials is too limited to warrant his participation in the attempt.

What will be done at this point is to bring forward the primary evidence,[1] descending in a general way through the accepted Mesopotamian chronology.[2]

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[1] Intellectual Adventure, p. 364.

[2] The Birth of Civilization in the Near East (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956), p. 62.

[3] Ibid., p. 61. See below, however, p. 55, for the disappearance of agricultural terminology from the extant hierogamic texts.

The bulk of the relevant literary remains are Sumerian, and much of what is "known" about the Sacred Marriage in Babylonian and Assyrian times is in fact inferential.[3] Kramer summarizes the extant texts as follows:

> The available Sumerian literary material, new and old, concerned with the sacred marriage, consists of (1) poems pertaining to the premarital courting and wooing of Dumuzi and Inanna; (2) poetic compositions relating to the marriage ritual, and stressing its importance for the welfare of the king and the prosperity of Sumer and its people; and (3) rhapsodic love songs uttered by the goddess Inanna to Dumuzi or by one of the temple hierodules to the king in the role of Dumuzi.[4]

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[1] Myths and epics are hereby assigned a secondary place, along with the testimony of art and artifacts, for reasons given below. See pp. 63-66.

[2] The dates used hereafter are taken largely from the very complete Synchronistic Table in P. van der Meer, The Chronology of Western Asia and Egypt ("Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui," Vol. II; 2nd ed. rev.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), following p. 95. Somewhat higher dates, down to the Middle Assyrian Period, are to be found in charts prepared by Edward F. Campbell, Jr., BANE, pp. 220-24; H. W. F. Saggs, The Greatness That Was Babylon: A Sketch of the Ancient Civilization of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1962), pp. 531-36; and Oppenheim, Ancient Mesopotamia, pp. 335-47.

[3] "About the ritual marriage we have almost no information at all, and yet are assured not merely that it took place, but that it was symbolically of the utmost importance, being in fact the cult-act of the old agricultural religion upon which the fruitfulness of the year depended. By an odd chance there has survived much more about this matter from the Sumerian period than from the late Babylonian times to which the New Year texts in their present form belong" (C. J. Gadd, "Babylonian Myth and Ritual," MAR, p. 56).

[4] PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 490.

There is also a brief reference to the rite on Cylinder B of Gudea of Lagash (*ca*. 2150/2000), and still briefer and more stylized allusions have been culled from Babylonian and Assyrian liturgical and epistolary literature. A catalog of texts, written in Akkadian, is asserted to refer to later songs "similar" to those in the third group mentioned by Kramer above. Their first lines "give some idea of the genre":

> I am shattered with love for you.
> . . . .
> For this night, for this evening.
> . . . .
> How lucious, how bright.
> . . . .
> After I lay in the bosom of the son.[1]

By assembling all possible citations--ranging from direct to indirect, and from explicit to cryptic--one may infer a pattern of celebration which was very widely extended indeed. E. Douglas van Buren contends that "evidence exists of the marriage" at Lagaš, Ur, Larsa, Nippur, Uruk, Ašnunnak, Badtibira, Isin, Mari, Zabala, Eridu, Dilmun, Keš, Adab, Umma, Sippar, and Dilbat, with "later examples" at Babylon, Borsippa, Kalah, Arbela, Uruk, and Aššur.[2] Every major deity in the Mesopotamian pantheon is included in the above collation.[1]

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[1] W. G. Lambert, "Divine Love Lyrics From Babylon," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (1959), p. 6.

[2] "The Sacred Marriage in Early Times in Mesopotamia," *Orientalia*, N.S., Vol. XIII, pp. 2-3. Much of Mrs. Van Buren's documentation for this essay has been inaccessible; some of it, representing untranslated cuneiform texts, would be unavailable even if accessible. The present writer has therefore used the article with some reserve. This tendency has been heightened by her apparent readiness here and elsewhere to accept mythical references (e.g., the Epic of Gilgamesh, *ibid.*, p. 41, nn. 1-3) and glyptic materials unaccompanied by text (see below, p. 68, n. 3) as "evidence."

The celebration of the hieros gamos seems generally to have occurred in connection with a "New Year Festival," though this relationship is often assumed in the absence of substantial textual evidence.[2] It has been variously proposed that the Festival itself was observed at the equinoxes[3] or at the solstices.[4] Its observance lasted at least down into Neo-Babylonian times,[5] and Pallis asserts that "the new lords of Babylon, the Persians, celebrated the annual festival like true Babylonians when peace had been restored in the country."[6]

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[1] Or, N.S., XIII, pp. 2-3. Hartmut Schmökel, whose particular views will be treated in more detail in Chapter V, asserts with characteristic confidence that there was "kein Stadtgott, der ihn sich in Verbindung mit seiner weiblichen Partnerin nicht zu eigen machte, und keine Muttergöttin, mag sie nun Nintu, Ningal, Ninsun, Nisaba, Mach, Ninchursag, Baba oder Geschtinanna heissen, die nicht ihren Buhlen zur Frühlingszeit festlich empfing, um ihn auf ihr heiliges Lager zu ziehen" (Das Land Sumer: Die Wiederentdeckung der ersten Hochkultur der Menschheit [Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1955], p. 126).

[2] See above, pp. 26-27.

[3] "The battle of the gods and the marriage were enacted as a regular drama at the akītu festival which from the time of Hammurabi was celebrated in the month of Nisannu, i.e. around the vernal equinox; in the middle Sumerian period (Sargon of Agade, Gudea) at the autumnal equinox, since the year began in the month Tashritu at that time" (Pallis, Antiquity . . . , p. 691). Cf. Gadd, MAR, pp. 46-47.

[4] Ivan Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri A.-B., 1943), p. 33. [Since he cites Gadd (ibid.), however, one wonders whether he may actually have meant to say "equinoxes."]

[5] Cf. references to Nabonidus' failure to come to Babylon for "the festival of the New Year" (ANET, p. 306a).

[6] BAF, p. 691. Cf. ANET, pp. 315a, 316a-b, and 306b-307a.

The Early Dynastic Period

The Sacred Marriage probably had its origins in the city of Uruk (also known in the Bible as Erech and in modern Arabic as Warka), whose tutelary deity was the goddess of sexual love and procreation, Inanna.[1] It can be traced back at least to the kingship of Enmerkar, "the one who built Uruk."[2] In a recently recovered Sumerian epic tale, Enmerkar receives from the ruler of the city-state of Aratta a threatening message which reads:

> Let him (Enmerkar) bend the neck before us, carry the basket for me;
> When he has bent the neck before me, has bent the . . . neck before me,
> Then he and I--
> He will live with Inanna by the wall
> (But) I will live with Inanna in the lapis lazuli house of Aratta,
> Will lie by her side on a fruitful bed,
> Will lie in sweet slumber on the ornate (?) bed;
> He will gaze upon Inanna (only) in dreams of the night,
> (But) I will converse with Inanna near her feet, all-white.[3]

In the development of the rite, however, it was the half-mythical, half-historical figure of Dumuzi[1] who came to be identified as the archetypal husband of Inanna.[2] In a text from Nippur, for example, the goddess invites the king in "a song about her vulva," set plainly in agricultural terminology:

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[1] Kramer, PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 489.

[2] Thorkild Jacobsen, The Sumerian King List (Oriental Institute: Assyriological Studies, No. 11; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939, p. 87. Table II, following p. 208, gives his dates as *ca.* 2948-2928 B.C. The chronologies listed above on p. 42, n. 2 do not offer dates for this ruler, but in general they would seem to call for a lowering of this chronology by as much as three centuries.

[3] Kramer comments: "While not everything in this passage is crystal clear, it does indicate that already in the days of Enmerkar . . . the royal marriage with the goddess Inanna was an essential part of Sumerian rite and creed" ("The Biblical 'Song of Songs' and the Sumerian Love Songs," Expedition, Vol. V, No. 1 (1962), p. 26.

> "It is fallow land, in the plain . . .
> . . . .
> I, the maid, who will be its plower?
> My vulva is . . . wet ground for (?) me (?),
> I, the queen, who will station there the ox?"
> "Lady, the king will plow it for you,
> Dumuzi, the king, will plow it for you."
> "Plow my vulva, my sweetheart."
> Inanna bathed (her) holy lap,
> Ninegal, the holy . . .[3]

Kramer interprets the closing lines of this portion as "pertaining to the sexual union of the couple."[4] It is followed by several lines apparently referring to the abundant vegetation ensuing from their union:

> At the lap of the king, the high-standing cedar . . . ,
> The plants stood high by (his) side, the grain stood high
>   by (his) side,
> The . . . garden flourished luxuriantly by his side.[5]

Roughly the second half of the poem, thereafter, consists of expressions of Inanna's joy at dwelling beside her spouse in the palace, and concluding with her repeated assurances that she will "preserve" it for him:

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[1] Cf. Jacobsen, The Sumerian King List, p. 73 and p. 89 for the ante-diluvian and post-diluvian forms of Dumuzi. In Table II his historical reign is listed as ca. 2908-2888 B. C., but see above, p. 45, n. 2.

[2] Kramer, PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 490.

[3] Ibid., p. 506, obv., col ii, ll. 22, 26-33.

[4] Ibid., p. 507.

[5] Ibid., p. 506, obv., col. iii, ll. 9-11.

> My husband, the goodly storehouse, the sheepfold (?) . . .
> I, Inanna, will preserve for you,
> I will [watch] over your house of life.
> The brilliant, the place which enraptures the Land,
> The house where the fate of all the lands is decreed,
> Where the breath of life is ordained for the people,
> I, Ninegal, will preserve it for you,
> I will watch over your house of life.[1]

The Second Dynasty of Lagash

At Lagash, the divine couple were Ningirsu and Baba; votive offerings to the latter are recorded on the part of Ur-Nanshe and Urukagina, of the First Dynasty.[2]

It is Gudea, however, who at least two centuries later has provided us with reasonably certain allusions to a hierogamic celebration in his city. At the festival marking the beginning of the year, he doubled the quantities of gifts customarily brought by his predecessors to the goddess. These were, moreover, "cadeaux de noces"; the cuneiform word "désigne la dot que verse le fiancé au beau-père et qui reste la propriété de la fiancée."[3]

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[1] PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 507, obv., col. iii, ll. 28-35.

[2] Edouard Dhorme, Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie ("Mana: Introduction à l'histoire des religions," Vol. I, Part 2; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1945), pp. 105-106. The dynasty seems to have ruled from shortly after 2500 B.C., for about a century. See Saggs, The Greatness . . ., pp. 44-48.

[3] Dhorme, ibid., p. 242.

The holy union is thought of as taking place between Baba and Ningirsu, who is assimilated both to Dumuzi and to the "king" in a song in praise of Baba:[1]

> Enlil hat dich, die Jungfrau, die Mütter Baba,
> im strahlenden Ekur freundlich angeschaut,
> hat dich für den Herrn Ningirsu grossartig geschmückt,
> . . . .
> In deinem Tarsirsir, das dir An gegründet hat
> entscheidest du das Schicksal aller Länder,
> . . . .
> Baba, dein Wort is festgegründet:
> . . . .
> Baba, im Orte Lagasch, deinem heiligen Sitz der reinen
>   "göttlichen Kräfte,"
> ergeht es an den König in Freuden,
> ergeht es, Baba, an den "üppiggewachsenen [König]."
> Auf dein heiliges Wort grüsst er dich im Gebete.[2]

Though the "determination of destinies" is clearly stated in the foregoing verses, the consummation of the hieros gamos as its occasion is at most only implied. One turns therefore to Gudea's "Cylinder B," whose central theme is the introduction of the divine couple within the new temple which Gudea has erected for them:[3]

> Ningirsu, dein Haus habe ich dir gebaut:
> In Freude mogest du dort einziehen!
>
> "Meine Baba, deine Zella habe ich dir errichtet:
> Nimm dort gute Wohnung!"
> . . . .

---

[1] "Da 'Uppiggewachsener' als Beiname des Tammuz bezeugt ist, das Lied zudem unmissverständliche Hinweise auf die Vereinigung zwischen der Muttergöttin und dem 'König' enthält, fällt hier Ningirsu die Rolle zu, die in Uruk die des 'Hirten' Tammuz war" (A. Falkenstein and W. von Soden, Sumerische und akkadische Hymnen und Gebete [Zurich: Artemis-Verlag, 1953], p. 364).

[2] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

[3] Falkenstein, ibid., p. 374.

Das Jahr ist dahingegangen, die Monate vollendet,
ein neues Jahr ist in den Himmel eingetreten.[1]

As was the case with Inanna in the earlier song quoted above,[2] Baba is referred to in terminology drawn from the sources and the products of natural fertility:

Als Baba in ihre Zella ging,
war sie die gute Frau, die sich um ihr Haus kümmert,
als sie zur Seite ihres Bettes trat,
war sie der Tigris in seiner Hochflut,
als sie sich neben ihren . . . setzte,
war sie, die Königin, die Tochter des heiligen An,
  ein schöner Garten voller Früchte.[3]

Finally, we come to a brief but reasonably certain reference to the coming-together of the couple in Ningirsu's "bedplace":

Sein Bett, das im "Bettort" steht,
ist eine Hürde, die an ihrem Ort guten (Nachwuchs) schafft,
in seinem heiligen . . . , das mit duftenden Kräutern
  bestreut ist,
ruht die Mutter Baba gut mit dem Herrn Ningirsu.[4]

The Third Dynasty of Ur

The actual union itself is much more vividly limned in three texts from Ur III. All three reproduce the words of the goddess,[5] or of her human representative.[1] In a song dedicated to Šulgi (2026-1979), the maiden tells first of her feminine preparations, then of the embrace:

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[1] SAHG, pp. 167-68, B II 18-20, III 1, 5-6.

[2] See above, p. 46.

[3] SAHG, pp. 169-70, B V 10-16.

[4] Ibid., p. 179, B XVI 19-XVII 3.

[5] "Le passage suivant est en émesal, ce qui signifie qu'Inanna parle" (J. van Dijk, "La fête de nouvel an dans un texte de Šulgi," Bibliotheca Orientalis, Vol. XI [1954], p. 86). Regarding the second of the songs to Šu-Sin below, Kramer says: "The poem is written in the Emesal dialect of Sumerian, which is known to have been reserved for female deities, and no doubt also for priestesses" (ANET, p. 496, n. 1).

> Pour le roi, pour le seigneur
> quand je me serai baignée,
> quand pour le pasteur, le fils fidèle, je me
> serai baignée,
> quand mon [. . .] sera orné,
> et quand par l'ambre mon visage resplendira,
> quand l'antimoine aura été mis sur mes yeux,
> quand dans la main de sa douceur,
> ma taille sera penchée,
> quand le seigneur qui se couche avec le pure Inanna
> le pasteur Dumuzi [aura dit]:
> "J'ouvrirai le sein."[2]

Here the union and the fixing of destiny are specifically and almost causally linked:

> Quand il m'aura caressée sur le lit,
> alors, moi, j'aurai des caresses pour le seigneur,
> un bon sort je lui fixerai,
> pour le pasteur Šulgi j'aurai des caresses,
> un bon sort je lui fixerai;
> je caresserai sa taille,
> je lui fixerai comme sort
> d'être le pasteur des pays![3]

The other two songs are addressed to Šu-Sin (1969-1961). The first "was no doubt intended to be recited in the course of the most hallowed of ancient rites, the rite of the 'sacred marriage'"; it "was in all probability recited by the chosen bride of King Shu-Sin."[4] The putative nature of Kramer's statements is worth noting, since the verses themselves speak only of sexual ecstasy:

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[1] For the discussion of the question of the representation of the god and goddess in the rite, see below, pp. 76 ff.

[2] Van Dijk, BiOr, XI, p. 86.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Kramer, HBS, pp. 212-13.

> You have captivated me, let me stand tremblingly before you,
> Bridegroom, I would be taken by you to the bedchamber,
> . . . .
> Bridegroom, let me caress you,
> My precious caress is more savory than honey,
> In the bedchamber, honey-filled,
> Let me enjoy your goodly beauty,
> . . . .
> Bridegroom, you have taken your pleasure of me,
> Tell my mother, she will give you delicacies,
> My father, he will give you gifts,
>
> Your spirit, I know where to cheer your spirit,
> Bridegroom, sleep in our house until dawn,
> Your heart, I know where to gladden your heart,
> Lion, sleep in our house until dawn.
> . . . .
> My lord god, my lord protector,
> My Shu-Sin who gladdens Enlil's heart,
> Give me pray of your caresses.
>
> Your place goodly as honey, pray lay (your) hand on it,
> Bring (your) hand over it like a _gishban_-garment,
> Cup (your) hand over it like a _gishban_-_sikin_-garment.
>
> It is a _balbale_-song of Inanna.[1]

The song's reference to Šu-Sin as "my lord god" is possibly one evidence of its use in the Sacred Marriage; in the second text to be considered, "the king's name is preceded by the god-determinative throughout the poem."[1] A second indicator is the classification of both the poems as "balbale" compositions. This word, according to Landsberger, refers generally to a literary form containing an exchange between a goddess and her beloved.[2]

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[1] Kramer, _HBS_, pp. 213-14. Elsewhere Kramer speaks of it as a song "purported to be sung by priestesses selected as brides for the king on the occasion of the _hieros-gamos_" and observes also that we may infer from it "the important role which love and sex played before marriage, at least in some cases" (_The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character_ [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963], p. 254).

The second of the two songs to Šu-Sin is a much less unified composition, in which "the logical relationships between the strophes is not too clear."[3] For our purpose at this point, only the last two of the six strophes are quoted:

> My god, of the wine-maid, sweet is her drink [Rauschtrank],
> Like her drink sweet is her vulva [Scham], sweet is her drink,
> Like her lips [Rede] sweet is her vulva, sweet is her drink
> Sweet is her mixed drink, her drink.
>
> My Shu-Sin who favored me,
> O my (Shu-Sin) who favored me, who fondled me,
> My Shu-Sin who favored me,
> My beloved of Enlil, (my) Shu-Sin,
> My king, the god of his [deines] land!
>
> It is a _balbale_ of Bau [für Baba].[4]

---

[1] Kramer, _ANET_, p. 496, n. 6. For a discussion of the relation of the _hieros gamos_ to the "divinization" of the king, see below, pp. 97-99.

[2] "Bal-bal-e-(d) als literarische Gattung . . . findet sich meist als Bezeichnung für eine Gattung religiöser Liebeslyrik: eine Göttin und ihr Geliebter führen ein Gespräch (bezw. singen ein Duett)" (B. Landsberger, "Jahreszeiten im Sumerisch-Akkadischen," _JNES_, Vol. VIII, No. 4 [1949], p. 295, n. 151). Kramer writes, however, that "_Balbale_ is the technical name for a category of Sumerian compositions which, to judge from the extant material, are hymnal in character; the actual meaning of the complex is still uncertain" (_ANET_, p. 42, n. 8).

[3] Kramer, _HBS_, p. 214.

[4] _Ibid._, p. 215. The variants and equivalents in brackets are taken from Falkenstein's translation in _SAHG_, p. 120.

The First Dynasty of Isin

By far the most full-orbed account we have of a hierogamy comes from a hymn to Inanna found on a number of tablets and fragments from Nippur.[1] King Iddin-Dagan (1905-1885), who at one point in the text is equated with Dumuzi, consummates the union with the goddess. Kramer's translation of the relevant section of the hymn is quoted in full, with Falkenstein's more important variants interpolated in brackets at the appropriate points:

> In the palace, the house which guides the land, the house
>   of the king of all lands,
> In its judgment-hall (?), where the blackheaded people gather,
> He (the king) erected a dais for the "Queen of the Palace"
>   (Inanna)
> The king, the god, lived with her in its midst.
> In order to care for the life of all the lands,
>   [Dass sie das Schicksal der Länder entscheide,]
> To examine closely the . . .
>   [dass sie am guten ersten Tag aufleuchte,]
> To carry out to perfection the divine rules on the day of
>   "sleeping,"
>   [am Schwarzmondtag die göttliche Ordnung vollende,]
> On the New Year, the day of rites,
> A sleeping place was set up for "my queen."
> They (the people) purify it with pots full of rushes,
>   and cedar.
> They set them up for "my queen" as their bed,
> Over it they spread a coverlet
>   [legte ihr als Geschenk ein . . . -Kleid zurecht.]
> A coverlet which rejoices the heart, makes sweet the bed.
>   [Dass sie sich in dem . . . -Kleid von Herzen freue, das
>   Lager geniesse,]
>
> "My queen" is bathed at [für] the holy lap,
> Is bathed at [für] the lap of the king,
> Is bathed at [für] the lap of Iddin-Dagan,
> The holy Inanna is scrubbed with soap,

---

[1] Kramer, Expedition, V, 1, p. 29.

Fragrant cedar oil is sprinkled on the ground.
The king goes with lifted head to the holy lap,
Goes with lifted head to the lap of Inanna,

Amaushumgalanna beds with her [liegt bei ihr],
Fondles lovingly her holy lap
  [kost ihren heiligen Leib.]
After the queen had long reposed on the holy lap,
  [Nachdem die Herrin sich im heiligen Schoss des Lagers
    gesättigt,]
She murmurs . . .
"O Iddin-Dagan, you . . . "
  [("Des Helden Id)dindagan (. . .) bin ich."]

For the holy sacrifices, for the well-established rites,
  [Beste Opfergaben aufzuschütten, die Reinigungsriten zu
    vollführen,]
For the fire-seared altar, for the cypress (?) -sprouting
  altar
  [Weihrauch aufzuschütten, Wacholderscheite zu verbrennen,]
For the abundant bread-offerings, for the amply-filled vases,
He entered with her in his lofty palace,
He embraced his beloved wife,
Embraced the holy Inanna,
Led her forth like the light of day to the throne on the
  great dais,
Installed (?) himself at her side like the king Utu (the
  sun god),
Paraded abundance, cheer, and plenty before her,
Prepared a goodly feast for her,
Paraded the blackheads before her, (saying):
"With the drum (?) whose speech is louder than the storm,
The sweet-voiced lyre (?), the ornament of the palace,
The harp that soothes the spirit of man,
O singers, let us utter songs that rejoice the heart."

The king put a hand to the food and drink,
Amaushumgalanna put a hand to the food and drink,
The palace is in song, the king in joy,
By the people sated with plenty,
Amaushumgalanna stands in lasting joy,
May his days be long on the fruitful throne.[1]

---

[1] Expedition, V, 1, pp. 29-30; SAHG, pp. 96-98.

Themes and practices which have been met before are here set in an obviously ordered liturgy, expressly connected with the celebration of the New Year. A specific cult-place is prepared, and the hieros gamos is duly consummated in the context of elaborate sacrificial offerings. There follows a joyful banquet, marked by general feasting, and the hope that the king's reign may be long and fruitful.

At least one of the earliest themes is missing, however, or at any rate it is no longer explicitly present. That is the use, in the earlier hymns, of concrete and vivid agricultural terminology; it is to be found in the texts down through Gudea of Lagash, but is absent from those of Ur III and Isin. Nor will such language be encountered in any of the later sources known to the present writer.

There is one other Isin text, belonging to the reign of Lipit-Ištar (1864-1854), which is commonly alleged to be related to the Sacred Marriage. However, since it deals at most with the preliminaries to the rite, and more particularly with the king's "divinization," it will be discussed below under the latter heading.

The Babylonian and Assyrian periods.

The assumption that the Sacred Marriage was celebrated by Marduk and Ṣarpanitum at Babylon is still widely made.[1] That this assumption rests upon a very small evidential base has long been recognized. Pallis, in his classic study of the akitu festival, averred that "we have few but conclusive testimonies." He went on to say that "our material from Babylon is confined to two passages, which are, however, supplemented by other texts, a letter referring to events at Borsippa (?), and the Gudea inscriptions from Lagaš."[1]

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[1] Cf. Pallis, Antiquity . . . , p. 692; Dhorme, Les religions . . . , p. 244; and Bottéro, La religion . . . , p. 127.

Of the "two passages from Babylon," one is a brief reference from a fragmentary calendar of festivals, which reports that there was a celebration to Marduk in bît akîtu on the eleventh of Nisan. Shortly after that it is said of Marduk that "he hastened to the wedding feast."[2] The second passage is still more cryptic: it is a reference to "the house (temple) of the bed," and comes down from a text of Seleucid times.[3] If the Gudea texts are also to be called upon for support, one ought at least to note that the resulting fragments of "evidence" have been culled from a historical span of nearly two millennia!

As to the letter from "Borsippa (?)," its identification depends entirely upon its naming of Nabu and Tašmetum, the tutelary deities of that city. The hierogamic portions of the letter read as follows:

> Tomorrow, (that is) on the 4th (of Iyyar) toward evening, Nabu and Tashmetum will enter the bed chamber.
>
> . . . .
>
> From the 5th to the 10th (both) gods (will stay) in the bed chamber, the (temple) overseer staying (with them).[4]

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[1] BAF, p. 197.

[2] Ibid., p. 198.

[3] Ibid., p. 104. Pallis states, in fact, that it was "composed at Uruk in the time of the Seleucids on December 12th 229 B.C." (ibid., p. 108).

[4] Robert H. Pfeiffer, State Letters of Assyria: A Transliteration and Translation of 355 Official Letters Dating from the Sargonid Period

There is in the same collection a similar letter, referring to a parallel celebration in the city of Calah:

> On the 3rd of Iyyar in the city of Calah the bed of Nabu will be prepared; Nabu will enter the bed-chamber. On the 4th the return of Nabu (will take place).
>
> . . . .
>
> Let (the officiating priests) complete carefully the prescribed rites of their deity for the preservation of the life of the crown prince my lord; let them do whatever the crown prince my lord shall write. May Bel and Nabu, who in the month Shebat grant protection, guard the life of the crown prince my lord. May they prolong your reign to the end of time.[1]

Whatever the merits of the attempts to reconstruct the liturgy at Babylon,[2] it is clear that the available evidence offers little which is instructive about the intent of the celebration of the Sacred Marriage in this period.

Mari and the "Western Semites"

A good deal has been made, finally, of an apparent reference to the celebration of the hieros gamos in a text from Mari.[3] The site

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(722-625 B.C.) ("American Oriental Series," Vol. VI; New Haven, Connecticut: American Oriental Society, 1935), pp. 156-57, 11. 6-8, 13-17.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 158, obv., 11. 7-10; rev., 11. 10-21.

[2] It is worth noting that Frankfort is forced to rely on the same collection of fragmentary and inferential evidence (*Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948], pp. 330-31). Sidney Smith, in an essay generally intended to defend the "myth and ritual pattern," nonetheless says frankly of the Sacred Marriage of Marduk: "Definite evidence that it was celebrated at the New Year festival is lacking, the best witness is the statement that implies a bridal after the festival" (*MRAK*, p. 41). See above, p. 26.

[3] Engnell speaks of "the extraordinarily great role evidently

draws much of its relevance for this study from its mediating location between the culture of the Valley of the Two Rivers and that of the Mediterranean coastlands.[1] The editor of the text himself alludes to this aspect of its potential significance, provided that the tablet is not simply an exercise performed by an apprentice scribe.[2]

The text remains thus far a unique item among the numerous tablets recovered from the palace at Mari, the rest of which have been composed almost exclusively of administrative documents, tabulations, and epistolary literature. The tablet itself is mutilated and lacks a beginning, factors which "ne permet pas de déterminer la nature exacte de ce rituel."[3] Dossin places it in the First Dynasty of Babylon, and inclines to the opinion that it is a copy of a text which existed

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played by the hieros gamos rite in the area under consideration, in Mari, Sidon, Ugarit, Jerusalem etc. We thus find in Mari, in an extremely interesting ritual, the king and the goddess as partners in the divine nuptials" (Studies, p. 77). The initial clause of this statement will receive further consideration in Chapters IV and V.

[1] "Mari thus represents, as exactly as could possibly be expected, the result of the adoption of Accadian culture by a nomadic West-Semitic folk, speaking a tongue which must have been virtually identical with the ancestral Hebrew of the Patriarchs" (Albright, FSAC, p. 155).

[2] "Si le rituel n'est pas une copie de scribe-apprenti, mais si, au contraire, les cérémonies qu'il décrit étaient bien accomplies dans le temple d'Ištar à Mari, on mesurera une nouvelle fois la profondeur de l'influence qu'a exercée la religion suméro-accadienne sur le Moyen-Euphrate" (Georges Dossin, "Un rituel du culte d'Ištar provenant de Mari," Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale, Vol. XXV, No. 1 [1938], p. 1).

[3] Ibid.

originally in Sumerian.[1] Here then are the opening lines from the tablet:

> . . . .
> [   ] sera répandu,
> [   ], dans le temple d'Ištar seulement, il placera.
> [Selon] le desire du roi,
> [sur le lit] d'Ištar il se couchera.
> Le matin, plus tôt que d'habitude
> on disposera l'offrande d'Ištar.
> On purifiera à plusieurs reprises le temple d'Ištar.[2]

Again, the allusion fails to inform the reader in any way about the mood and purpose of the action reported.

Dying and Rising Gods

The Frazerian thesis

In the post-Frazerian era, few concepts have been more seminal or appeared to be more inexpugnable than "the death and resurrection of Tammuz."[3] Frazer dated his much-sobered "Preface to the Third Edition" just over fifty years ago.[4] It would not be surprising if a concept which had functioned so fruitfully and for so long should cling stubbornly to life even after receiving a mortal wound.

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[1] RA, XXV, 1, p. 4. The tablet was found in the archives of Iasmah-Adad and his successor Zimrilim (1722-1690).

[2] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[3] "Under the names of Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, and Attis, the peoples of Egypt and Western Asia represented the yearly decay and revival of life, especially vegetable life, which they personified as a god who annually died and rose again from the dead. In name and detail the rites varied from place to place: in substance they were the same" (Frazer, Adonis Attis Osiris, I, p. 6). Frazer himself was more cautious than some of his descendants. He claimed only that Ištar was allowed to ascend from the nether world "in company probably with her lover Tammuz" (ibid., p. 9).

[4] "Cambridge, 16th January 1914" (ibid., pp. ix-x).

Such, at any rate, would seem to be the present state of affairs. The initial blow was delivered by S. N. Kramer's collation of newly-discovered tablets bearing on the Sumerian myth of "Inanna's Descent to the Nether World."[1] From these, he concluded that "Inanna did not save her husband Dumuzi from the nether world. Rather, it was she who, angered by his contemptuous attitude, actually handed him over to the demons to be carried off to the land of no return."[2]

A second, equally penetrating thrust followed shortly. It struck at the notion of the celebration of the death and resurrection of Marduk, during a Babylonian festival which also included the Sacred Marriage. This notion had been based largely on a text which W. von Soden now showed to have been thoroughly misunderstood.[3] "It is a propaganda work composed in Assyria in the time of Sennacherib and has nothing to do either with the death of Marduk or his resurrection or indeed with the New Year festival."[1]

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[1] The process actually began with Arno Poebel in 1914, and was completed by Kramer only in 1951 (HBS, pp. 167-69).

[2] Ibid., p. 169. Even the latter conclusion is inferential, and based on the assertion that "Dumuzi is well-known from various sources as an underworld deity" (ibid., p. 159). Elsewhere, Kramer has stated his position still more forcefully: "For more than half a century now, students of mythology . . . have taken Dumuzi to be the original prototype of the dying god who rises annually from the dead, the very archetype of the deity who dies every summer and is revived every spring. In an effort to get at the reasons for this erroneous but well-nigh universal view of the Dumuzi myth, I combed the relevant cuneiform literature patiently and carefully, but could find no supporting evidence whatever from the texts; it is based on nothing but inference and surmise, guess and conjecture" (Mythologies of the Ancient World [Chicago: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1961], p. 10).

[3] "Gibt es ein Zeugnis dafür, dass die Babylonier an die Wiederaufstehung Marduks glaubten?," Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und

It should be emphasized that although there is no allusion to the return of Tammuz from the nether world in the Sumerian myth, such an ascension does seem to be implied in the later Akkadian reworking of the story.[2] E. A. Speiser holds, however, that "the mention of Tammuz is

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verwandte Gebiete, N.F., Vol. XVII (1955), pp. 130-66. The present writer has not seen this article, and is dependent on its discussion by O. R. Gurney, "Tammuz Reconsidered: Some Recent Developments," Journal of Semitic Studies, Vol. VII, No. 2 (1962), pp. 155-56. More recent treatments, in any case, have begun to reflect the view of the Munster scholar. W. G. Lambert writes: "For the Babylonian New Year festival a standard work is S. A. Pallis, The Babylonian Akîtu Festival, but a warning must be given that one major text used by him has now been shown to have no connexion" (JSS, IV, 1, p. 3). Saggs concurs that"general books on the religions of the ancient Near East still give details of Marduk dying and rising again at the New Year Festival in Babylon, despite the fact that . . . von Soden of Munster has already shown that this interpretation of the text concerned, based on an out-of-date translation, is untenable" (The Greatness . . ., pp. 300-301).

[1] Gurney, JSS, VII, 2, p. 155. S. G. F. Brandon indicates that this view had begun to emerge in England even before the publication of von Soden's treatise. "At a meeting of the Comparative Religion Seminar in the University of Manchester in 1952, Dr T. Fish, Professor of Mesopotamian Studies in the University, maintained at length that one of the basic documents of the 'Myth and Ritual' thesis, an Assyrian text known as VAT 9555, had been seriously misinterpreted by its exponents" ("Divine Kings and Dying Gods," The Hibbert Journal, Vol. LIII [July, 1955], p. 330, n. 2). Indeed, the pack seems to be in full cry! Louis Vanden Berghe accuses Frazer and his successors of having forced on the Dumuzi-Tammuz texts a view drawn from the study of the classical pantheon. Moreover, he refers to two articles by P. Lambrechts in which "ce savant a vigoreusement combattu ce qu'il appelle le 'dogme' de la resurrection d'Adonis" (La Nouvelle Clio, VI, 5-6, p. 321 and n. 1).

[2] For the text, see ANET, p. 109a, ll. 47 ff.

. . . startling in this context," since there is no indication that he had descended.[1] Gurney terms the passage a "late addition to the Assyrian myth," and adds that if it does indeed allude to a resurrection, "this may be a late accretion to Babylonian religion due to West-Semitic influence."[2] This hypothesis, it may be noted, reverses the germinal assumption of the "Myth and Ritual School."[3]

The burials at Ur

It is against the background of these developments that one must next briefly consider the alleged association of the *hieros gamos* with the tombs discovered by Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur.[4] The chief burials were accompanied by large-scale sacrifice of human retainers and animals, a practice unattested in the Sumerian texts. Nonetheless, because of the unusual wealth and architecture of the tombs, Woolley assumed that they must be royal burials, and confessed his surprise that this view was immediately challenged.[5]

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[1] "The concluding part of the myth, therefore, will remain obscure in its allusions so long as additional material is not available" (*ibid.*, n. 28).

[2] *JSS*, VII, 2, p. 160.

[3] See S. H. Hooke's statement, above, p. 17 and n. 1, with regard to the Mesopotamian origin of the "Pattern."

[4] *Excavations at Ur: A Record of Twelve Years' Work* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1954), Chapter III.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

Among the earliest critics, Sidney Smith fixed upon the now well-known gold headdress and other tomb furnishings found with the female burial. This material, he asserted, "leaves little doubt of the aspect in which she was considered. . . . That lady was lying in bridal state--much as a goddess-bride must have lain on her consort's nuptial couch."[1] He suggested that a connection of the Sacred Marriage with the burials would somehow make the sacrifices explicable, but his development of this point is hypothetical in the extreme.[2]

A much more complete rationale for the relation between the *hieros gamos* and the sacrifices has been proposed by Anton Moorgat.[3] The slain king represented Tammuz, whose resurrection was symbolized by the subsequent removal of his coffin and corpse [thus explaining an otherwise puzzling aspect of Woolley's discoveries]. The slain queen reenacts the "Höllenfahrt der Ischtar."[4] Once reunited with her husband in the underworld, "vielleicht feiert sie mit ihm dort noch einmal symbolisch die Hochzeit."[5] The obviously voluntary participation by the sacrificial victims themselves is thus explained by their hope that they might share in their king-god's resurrection.[1]

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[1] "A Babylonian Fertility Cult," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1928), p. 865.

[2] "Fertility cults are often attended by blood-thirsty rites . . . [which] persisted, as almost all the other cultural features persisted, owing to the mysterious nature of the cults" (*ibid.*, pp. 867-68). Smith is careful to stress, however, that his theories apply only to two of the tombs, "and I should find it very difficult to explain many of the features of other closely related tombs in this way" (*ibid.*, p. 867).

[3] *Tammuz: Der Unsterblichkeitsglaube in der altorientalischen Bildkunst* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1949).

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

A number of objections may be made against this reconstruction,[2] but by far the most devastating is the blurring of the classic picture of Tammuz by the developments outlined above.[3] At present, it does not seem possible to associate the hieros gamos with a resurrection theme on the basis of the Ur tombs.

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[1] "Alles wird verständlich mit Hilfe dessen was wir über den Tammuz-Glauben und seinen Kult, vor allem die Feier der heiligen Hochzeit wissen. Auch versteht man, warum so viele Menschen ohne Bedenken in den Tod gehen konnten; sie alle gehen nicht in einen Tod, der ein Endzustand ist, sondern Übergang zu neuem Leben, so wie es ihr König und Gott Tammuz verkörpert" (ibid., p. 66). Schmökel also adopts this interpretation (Das Land Sumer, pp. 61, 157-58).

[2] Moortgat's allusion to the Semitic text of the Descent of Ištar, for example, is anachronistic in connection with Ur I. Woolley himself proposes a number of difficulties, which may be summarized as follows: (1) the hierogamic texts contain no mention of such sacrifice; (2) each tomb has only a single principal occupant, never a couple; (3) the bride chosen for the god would be young and attractive, whereas Shub-Ad was "about forty"; (4) the cemetery, representing "a considerable length of time," includes only sixteen royal tombs, whereas the Sacred Marriage "was, naturally, an annual affair" (Excavations at Ur, pp. 78-79).

[3] See above, pp. 59-62. Saggs retorts that "Woolley is unjust to women of forty" (The Greatness . . ., p. 376), and goes to some pains to account ritually for Shub-Ad's age and the infrequency of the royal burials (ibid., pp. 377-80). He affirms, however, that "a general non-acceptance of Moortgat's view of a widely diffused cult of Tammuz as the dying god who rose again . . . is the weightiest objection" (ibid., p. 381). Heidel (The Gilgamesh Epic . . ., p. 158) adopts Woolley's interpretation, and Frankfort (Kingship, n. 12, pp. 400-401) has abandoned his former acceptance of the view that the Ur burials represent participants in a Sacred Marriage.

Secondary Evidences of the Sacred Marriage

Art and artifacts

Even the most ambitious interpreters of non-textual materials take care to confront us with the problems inherent in their endeavors. Henri Frankfort, for example, qualifies his conclusions from seal-impressions with the warning that "the comparisons which we shall make are bound to remain hypothetical" because "we are throughout confined to inferences from circumstantial evidence."[1] The root of this problem is the absence of accompanying textual material, together with the present impossibility of establishing definite connections with texts which have been independently preserved.[2]

With regard to the artistic remains themselves, Mrs. Frankfort has raised the issue of "problematic space" in "pre-Greek art." We cannot even be certain that figures and objects which seem to be grouped together were in fact conceived by the artist as participating in the same event or sequence of events.[1]

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[1] *Cylinder Seals: A Documentary Essay on the Art and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1939), p. 63.

[2] *Ibid.* Moortgat begins his study by confessing with apparent chagrin that "kein Zweig der Archäologie ist so auf sich gestellt wie der vorderasiatische, da es hier kaum möglich ist, wie in Ägypten und Griechenland, in erheblichem Mässe schriftlich Angaben für die Erklärung der Denkmäler zu Hilfe zu nehmen. Nirgends hat die Archäologie so sehr ihren Eigenwert als Mittel zur Erkenntnis geistiger Zusammenhänge zu erweisen" (*Tammuz*, p. 1). It is for the same reason that Frazer's "conjecture" about the rock-carvings at Boghazköi must be treated with great reserve (see above, p. 1, n. 1). More recent interpreters are generally much more cautious, none of them going so far as to connect the *hieros gamos* directly with the processions. Cf. Frankfort, *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 127; Heinrich Otten, "Das hethitische Felsheiligtum von Yazilikaya," *Das Altertum*, Vol. II, No. 3 (1956), p. 146; and Hans Gustav Güterbock, "Hittite Religion," *Forgotten Religions*, ed. Ferm, p. 95; and also "Narration in Anatolian, Syrian, and Assyrian Art," *The American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. LXI, No. 1 (1957), p. 64.

Under these conditions, the opportunity for misinterpretation would seem to be rather greater than the probability of achieving a correct understanding, and the difficulty of differentiating convincingly between them greater still.[2]

It is therefore with these exceedingly important reservations that one proceeds to examine non-textual materials alleged to depict the Sacred Marriage. They consist substantially of a well-known vase from Uruk, and a small assortment of seals.

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[1] She speaks of "the question of what in actual fact constitutes a scene. Can we trust self-evidence if we are to decide whether a conglomeration of figures is intended to represent coherent action, whether juxtaposition means proximity? We shall have plenty of opportunity to note that we cannot, but must rely on imaginative interpretation. . . . Here to decide if figures are intended to be spatially related is often unanswerable, and the interpreter is in constant danger of reading into a scene what he wants to deduce from it and of explaining the absence or presence of features which do not tally with his interpretation as artistic incompetence" (Henrietta A. Groenewegen-Frankfort, Arrest and Movement: An Essay on Space and Time in the representational Art of the ancient Near East [London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951], pp. 10-11).

[2] An analogy of which the present writer has long been fond has been so forcefully stated by Leo Oppenheim as to merit its reproduction here: "If the monuments of Western Christianity were preserved for some distant and alien generation or a visitor from outer space, what could they possibly reveal of the essential tenets of that faith? The cathedrals, campaniles, the domes and baptisteries, towers, cloisters, and closes would remain mute; their iconography and carefully preserved skeletons --obvious objects of worship--would induce archeologists to propound fantastic theories to be harmonized with whatever conclusions they might draw from the general layout of the buildings, their structural and dimensional peculiarities, and their unbelievably complex and misleading display of decorations and statuary" (Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 173).

The alabaster vase from Uruk[1] considerably antedates the extant Sumerian texts.[2] It is covered with three bands in low relief; the bottom one is devoted to a series of animals and plants, and the middle one to a procession of naked porters, each holding a container before him. The central figure in the topmost band may be identified as the goddess Inanna, or her priestess.[3] Facing her are three figures, of which the first is another gift bearer, and the third a servant holding up the train of the middle figure. The latter, though only his feet were salvaged in the restoration, is generally supposed to be the king.[4]

What we have at most, then, is a scene showing a king and a procession of servants, presenting gifts at the shrine of the goddess. It has nonetheless been widely identified as referring to the Sacred Marriage.[1] "It is equally possible, however," says another student, "that the relief shows a specific ruler performing a presentation ritual on a specific occasion (e.g., in celebration of military success)."[2]

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[1] For photographs of the reconstructed original, see Ernst Heinrich, Kleinfunde aus den archaischen Tempelschichten in Uruk ("Ausgrabung der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft in Uruk-Warka," Band 1; Berlin: Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, 1936), Taf. 3. Taf. 2 contains photographs of the Berlin plaster cast which is usually shown: e.g., in James B. Pritchard, The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954), p. 171, pl. 502. Heinrich's Taf. 38 is an extremely useful sketch of the scenes on the vase, shown in flat projection.

[2] "Its exact date is unknown but it certainly belongs in the latter part of the prehistoric period, in round numbers shortly before 3000 B.C." (Ann Perkins, "Narration in Babylonian Art," AJA, LXI, 1, p. 55). Henri Frankfort also locates it in the "Protoliterate Period" (Art and Architecture . . ., p. 10).

[3] She stands before "ihr Symbol, das Ringbündel," and wears what appear to be the remnants of a horned crown (Heinrich, Kleinfunde . . ., p. 16).

[4] Cf. Frankfort, Art and Architecture . . ., p. 10; and Schmökel, Das Land Sumer, p. 56. Heinrich asserts only that "die folgende Figur stellte augenscheinlich die Hauptperson, den Anführer der Procession, dar" (ibid.).

Another representation of "the ceremony of the sacred marriage in its initial stages" confronts us, according to Mrs. Van Buren, in "a small group of cylinder seals without any artistic merit."[3] One of the figures in the series is indeed shown beside the "gate-post with streamer," indicating "the temple of the goddess Innin, who awaits within the coming of her bridegroom."[4] The latter "offers her his symbol of the ear of corn as a wedding gift,"[5] which she accepts in exchange for her gatepost, and then "leads the way towards the temple."[1]

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[1] Dhorme speaks of it only as representing "les cérémonies sacrées, qui se déroulaient dans le temple," but he had earlier described these as "des pratiques licencieuses qui caractérisent le culte de la déesse de l'amour" (_Les religions . . ._, p. 75). Moortgat considers the identification "so gut wie sicher" (_Tammuz_, p. 32), though he recognizes that the scene on the vase itself is limited to "der Augenblick der Begegnung zwischen beiden Partnern" (_ibid._, p. 41). Cf. also Groenewegen-Frankfort, _Arrest and Movement_, p. 151; Henri Frankfort, _Art and Architecture_, p. 10; Schmökel, _Das Land Sumer_, p. 56; and Jacobsen, _City Invincible_, ed. Kraeling and Adams, p. 68.

[2] "The numerous and elaborate offerings behind the goddess, as well as the magnificence of the vase itself, incline the author to the latter view. There are of course no contemporary records, and later documents give no assistance in interpretation" (Perkins, _AJA_, LXI, 1, p. 56).

[3] E. Douglas Van Buren, "A Ritual Sequence," _Or_, N.S., Vol. XXV, p. 39. Four of the seals are reproduced in Heinrich, _Kleinfunde . . ._, Taf. 18a-d.

[4] Van Buren, _ibid._; Heinrich, _ibid._, Taf. 18a.

[5] Van Buren, _ibid._, p. 40; Heinrich, _ibid._, Taf. 18c.

The tenuously deductive nature of these conclusions needs to be stressed. In regard both to the vase and to the seals, one is reasonably certain only that they concern an occasion on which gifts are presented at the shrine of Inanna. So far as the present writer is aware, there are no substantial grounds for assuming that such offerings were made only in connection with the Sacred Marriage.

The reference seems rather more certain, however, on a small seal discovered at Tell Asmar (Eshnunna).[2] The scene depicts a couch, on which two figures recline, one above the other. Beneath the couch is a scorpion, which "may symbolize Ishara, the goddess of love."[3] A similar scene is said to appear on two fragments of a limestone stela recovered from the temple in the same excavation.[4]

At the head of the couch, the seal shows "a large vase from which project three drinking-tubes." Frankfort connects this object with the references in the hierogamic texts to a feast which followed "the divine nuptials."[1] Such a relationship is at least clearly suggested on the seal. It is not so obvious, as other scholars assume, that independent drinking scenes allude, prima facie, to the hieros gamos.[2] Frankfort has observed that this form of communal sipping from a common container "seems to have been the usual manner of enjoying beer in the Ancient Near East."[3]

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[1] Van Buren, ibid.; Heinrich, ibid., Taf. 18b.

[2] Pritchard, ANEP, p. 220, pl. 680.

[3] Frankfort, Cylinder Seals, p. 75.

[4] Frankfort, Iraq Excavations of the Oriental Institute: 1932-33 ("Oriental Institute Communications," No. 17; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934), p. 46. The stela is shown as Fig. 40, p. 45, and the seal mentioned above (n. 2 on this page) as Fig. 42, p. 48. The present writer does not find the connection between the two scenes self-evident, on the basis of these reproductions.

In any case, it does not appear that the non-textual materials provide any additional insights into the Sacred Marriage. Rather, it may properly be emphasized again that their interpretation depends entirely on the textual remains, which are in no way directly associated with them.

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[1] Frankfort, Iraq Excavations . . ., p. 49.

[2] Moortgat refers, for example, to "das Symposion, d.h. die Darstellung der heiligen Hochzeit" (Tammuz, p. 49). He does support this identification by asserting that associated representations of "grossen Kultwagen und dem heiligen Boot der Götter" must refer to the New Year Festival and therefore to the Sacred Marriage (ibid., pp. 41-42). It would seem that the latter connection, if absolutized, is equally unsupportable. Cf. Schmökel's statement: "Da ist schliesslich das 'Symposion,' das kultische Trinkgelage, das als bildlicher Ausdruck der alles Leben erneuernden 'Heiligen Hochzeit' zwischen Inanna und Dumuzi verwendet wird" (Das Land Sumer, p. 56).

[3] He speaks of "similar scenes appearing on Syrian seals; and a Syrian mercenary is depicted thus occupied on a stela found at Tell el Amarna in Egypt. Xenophon describes the Armenians as drinking 'sweet wine of barley' with corn swimming on top of the liquid, which had therefore to be sucked up through 'straws without joints.' And metal strainers, fitted probably into the base of these straws, or tubes made entirely of metal, are found in Egypt and Syria, as well as in Mesopotamia" (Cylinder Seals, pp. 77-78). For illustrations, see ANEP, p. 48, pls. 157-58, and Pritchard's commentary on p. 267.

Myth and epic

We confront a rather different sort of problem with regard to Mesopotamian myths and epics. Hierogamic allusions are unquestionably present. What is not certain is that they necessarily correspond to religious observances. Oppenheim in particular argues vigorously that "all these works which we are wont to call mythological should be studied by the literary critic rather than by the historian of religion."[1]

Though the adjudication of this issue lies in general beyond the competence of the present writer, it does seem possible to distinguish between the evidences of hieros gamos in the myths, and those in the epics. That is, the mythical allusions concern cosmogonic occasions and divine personnel which are never "represented" in the extant ritual texts of the Sacred Marriage.

In the myth of Enki and Ninhursag,[2] for example, one meets a coordination of sexual activity with natural fertility which is certainly reminiscent of some of the hierogamic texts already considered:

> Enki (before) the wise Nintu, (the mother of the land),
> Causes his phallus to water the dikes,
> Causes his phallus to submerge the reeds,
> Verily causes his phallus to . . . ,

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[1] "These literary formulations are, in my opinion, the work of Sumerian court poets and of Old Babylonian scribes imitating them, bent on exploiting the artistic possibilities of a new literary language . . . What they contain are adaptations, for a late public, of mythological elements, unsophisticated and often primitive, dim reflections of stories that circulated among certain groups of the population of Mesopotamia as an inheritance of a distant past" (Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 177).

[2] Cf. Kramer's introduction and translation, ANET, pp. 37-41.

> Thereupon he said, "*Let* no one walk in the marshland,"
> Thereupon Enki said: "(*Let* no one walk in the marshland),"
> He swore by the life of Anu.[1]

It is not at all obvious, however, just how this activity is related to the copulation, conception, and gestation described in the lines which immediately follow:[2]

> She took the semen into the womb, the semen of Enki.
> One day being her one month,
> Two days being her two months,
> Three days being her three months,
> Four days being her four months,
> Five days (being her five months),
> Six days (being her six months),
> Seven days (being her seven months),
> Eight [days] (being her eight months),
> Nine [days] being her nine months, the months of "womanhood."[3]

Enki in turn impregnates the daughter of this union, and likewise his granddaughter of the second union. He thus produces (as his own great-granddaughter) Uttu, the goddess of plants.[4] If this sequence of copulations represents a mythical occurrence of the hieros gamos, it surely appears in a form which is never recapitulated in the ritual texts.

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[1] *ANET*, p. 39a, ll. 66-72. Kramer notes, however, as the italicized [underlined] portions show, that this is a "passage whose interpretation is far from clear" (*ibid.*, p. 37a).

[2] Morris Jastrow's earlier attempt to develop this relationship ("Sumerian Myths of Beginnings," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. XXXIII [January, 1917], pp. 91-144) would seem to be vitiated by the considerable transformation which Kramer has effected in the translation and understanding of the text.

[3] *ANET*, p. 39a, ll. 76-85. Kramer elsewhere specifically describes this passage as "a period of gestation lasting nine days, the poet being careful to note that each day corresponds to a month in the human period of gestation" (*Sumerian Mythology: A Study of Spiritual and Literary Achievement in the Third Millennium B.C.* [rev. ed.; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961], p. 56).

[4] Kramer, *ibid.*, p. 57. For the full text, see *ANET*, p. 39a-b, ll. 86-127.

The same sort of judgment may safely be rendered, to take another example, on the account of the birth of Marduk:

> In that same place his cult hut he founded.
> Ea and Damkina, his wife, dwelled (there) in splendor.
> In the chamber of fates, the abode of destinies,
> A god was engendered, most able and wisest of gods.
> In the heart of Apsu was Marduk created,
> In the heart of holy Apsu was Marduk created.
> He who begot him was Ea, his father;
> She who bore him was Damkina, his mother.
> The breast of goddesses he did suck.[1]

Oppenheim says of this passage: "In the outdoor sanctuary of the giparu the new world-era is inaugurated by a solemn cohabitation which is to yield the sun-god and future ruler of the world."[2] Yet though the Enûma eliš "was recited with due solemnity on the fourth day of the New Year's festival,"[3] there is at present no indication that this union was thereby associated with the ritual celebration of the hieros gamos.

The possible indications of hierogamy in the epic materials must be viewed somewhat differently, if only because their stories relate events from the human rather than the divine sphere.[4]

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[1] E. A. Speiser's translation, ANET, p. 61b-62a, ll. 77-85. For ll. 77-78, Oppenheim once offered the following: "There he erected a 'Holy Grove' for himself/ and Ea and Damkina celebrated (lit. sat down) (therein) in ma[jesty the Sacred Marriage!" ("Mesopotamian Mythology," Or, N.S., Vol. XVI [1947], p. 214).

[2] Oppenheim, ibid.

[3] Speiser, ANET, p. 60b.

[4] "The story [of Gilgamesh] is called an epic rather than a myth as the main participants are human beings rather than deities" (Saggs,

Two widely divergent interpretations of the encounter between Ištar and Gilgamesh[1] may be noted. Van Dijk suggests that the hieros gamos had declined in importance, and that "nous apprenons peut-être l'echo de cette évolution" in the hero's scornful rejection of the goddess' advances.[2] Contenau also notes that "the suggestion has been made that this passage must represent a later interpolation, expressing a reaction against the practices involved in the cult of Ishtar, such as ritual prostitution." He reminds us, however, that "ritual prostitution was still being practised in Mesopotamia when Herodotus was travelling there."[3]

The other extreme is represented in the frequently-met assumption that the passage must somehow support the practice of the hieros gamos.[4] Van Buren avows, in fact, that "the marriage of a goddess and a priest-king acting the part of the divine bridegroom is best illustrated in the

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The Greatness . . ., p. 291). It must be remembered, of course, that Gilgamesh himself was only one-third human, and two-thirds divine (ANET, p. 88b, ii, 16).

[1] Tab. VI, ll. 1-78 (ANET, pp. 83a-84b).

[2] BiOr, XI, p. 88.

[3] Everyday Life . . ., p. 265.

[4] Sidney Hooke, for example, alludes to "the implications of the Gilgamesh Epic as to the marriage of Ishtar to the king of Erech" (The Origins of Early Semitic Ritual [London: Oxford University Press, 1938], p. 6, n. 1). C. J. Gadd comments: "The love of Ishtar, despite the contumely with which it was repulsed, was not merely an illicit passion. As king of the city Gilgamesh was bound in duty to espouse the goddess at the right time, and none could be mythologically more appropriate than at his return from victory over a giant (Humbaba)" (Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East [London: Oxford University Press, 1948], 16).

early period by the story of Gilgameš, lord of Uruk."[1] One can only note that her statement leans heavily upon translations now more than thirty years old.[2] In the more recent renderings, what functioned as the principal support for her interpretation would seem to have disappeared.[3]

Just as in the case of the glyptic remains, then, so with regard to the myths and epics this brief survey concludes without having remarked anything new. Indeed, in the latter case it has revealed nothing at all which seems to refer to a celebration of the hieros gamos as it is attested in the Sacred Marriage texts.

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[1] Or, N.S., XIII, p. 41. She weaves into her evidence a passage from Tablet II which refers to the preparation of a bed for the goddess Išhara (ibid., n. 2).

[2] She alludes especially (ibid., p. 5, nn. 2-4; p. 41, nn. 1, 3) to Erich Ebeling's translation in Hugo Gressmann (ed.), Altorientalische Texte zum Alten Testament (2nd ed. rev.; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1926), p. 160; and to Stephen Langdon, "The Sumerian Epic of Gilgameš," JRAS (1932), p. 917. The latter is a much earlier version of the Gilgamesh story. To reconstruct a hierogamy out of phrases chosen at large from the two rather different accounts seems an indefensible procedure. See Kramer's comments on the Sumerian Gilgamesh materials, ANET, pp. 47-48, 50.

[3] Cf. especially the passage in Tablet II (ANET, p. 78a, col. v, ll. 23 ff.). Heidel interprets this to mean that "Gilgamesh and Enkidu meet, at the entrance to the community house. This place was to be the scene of one of Gilgamesh's nocturnal orgies. But Enkidu is so repelled by this unseemly affair that he tries to block the passage to prevent Gilgamesh from entering the house" (The Gilgamesh Epic, p. 6).

The Role-Players

The king as Dumuzi

The texts almost invariably refer to the male participant in the hierogamy as the "king." Since Dumuzi himself was a quasi-historical "king," however, the term hardly warrants the carte blanche assumption that its referent is always the local ruler.[1]

On only two occasions is a historical monarch specifically named. The earlier of the two is Šulgi, the second king of the Third Dynasty of Ur. In the text quoted by Van Dijk, he is referred to successively as "le roi, . . . le seigneur"; "le pasteur Dumuzi"; and "le pasteur Šulgi."[2] An equally explicit reference may be found to Iddin-Dagan of Isin.[3]

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[1] Arvid S. Kapelrud asserts, for example, that "there can be no doubt as to who played the rôle of Ningirsu in this cult: that was the ensi, Gudea himself" (Baal in the Ras Shamra Texts [Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1952], p. 29). The present writer has been unable to locate any direct reference in the Gudea texts to his participation in the Sacred Marriage. Sidney Smith's claim seems to indicate more accurately the state of the evidence: "It is fair inference that Gudea as the city governor played the part of Ningirsu" (JRAS [October, 1928], p. 853). On the other hand, see below, p. 87, n. 2.

[2] See above, p. 50.

[3] "Der Hauptinhalt ist nämlich die Vereinigung Inannas mit dem König am Neujahrsfest, mit Iddindagan, dem 3. König von Isin, der hier den Geliebten der Himmelsherrin zu vertreten hat oder genauer der irdische Repräsentant Ama^{c}uschumgalannas ist" (Falkenstein, SAHG, p. 367). Kramer comments that the hymn "closes with the celebration of the holy marriage between the goddess and Iddin-Dagan, a king who reigned a millennium later than Dumuzi, in Sumer's last dying days when it was being overwhelmed by the Semitic nomads from the west" (Expedition, V, 1, p. 29). Gurney asserts that "this text establishes the fact that at least at Isin in early times the king performed the ceremony in person and in doing so was identified with the young lover of the goddess" (JSS, VII, 2, p. 156).

Phrases such as "the king, the god" and "the lap of Iddin-Dagan," along with several references to "Amauschumgalanna," leave little doubt as to what the text is meant to convey.[1]

The priestess as Inanna

The testimony with regard to the human representative of Inanna is rather more ambiguous. The scholarly estimates of the possibility of determining this point range from negative[2] through tentatively affirmative[3] to positive.[4]

The present writer has encountered only one text which refers univocally to the participation of a human female in the *hieros gamos*.[5]

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[1] The full text is quoted above, pp. 53-54.

[2] "We are free to speculate as to the manner in which the goddess was represented in the Mesopotamian ritual, since there is no information available on this point" (Frankfort, *Kingship*, p. 296).

[3] "Il n'est donc pas impossible que, lors du Nouvel An, la présence d'une prêtresse permit au roi, substitut divin, de célébrer effectivement dans le temple les noces du dieu avec la déesse" (Labat, *Le caractère . . .*, p. 250). "Il est possible que la déesse ait été alors figurée par l'une des prêtresses qu'on appelait nin-dingir 'dame de dieu'" (Dhorme, *Les religions . . .*, p. 246). Bottéro says of the *ēntu* that she "pourrait avoir eu, entre autres, pour office de figurer et de remplacer l'épouse de dieu à l'occasion de la hiérogamie" (*La religion*, p. 113).

[4] "In the earliest period the *Entu* was the female counterpart of the *En* in the Sacred Marriage upon which the fertility of the land depended, and in this sense was truly the human 'wife of the god.' This was the basis of the report in Herodotus (I 181-2)" (Saggs, *The Greatness . . .*, p. 349).

[5] There is also an interesting but not very informative reference in an Assyrian letter to "the festal house of Tashmetum" and to "a woman who made an appearance for Tashmetum" (Leroy Waterman, *Royal*

The reference hinges, as will be seen, upon a single word:

> The king goes with lifted head [to the holy lap],
> He goes with lifted head to [the holy] lap [of Inanna],
> The king going with [lifted head],
> Going to my queen with lifted head,
> From . . .
> Embraces the hierodule . . . [1]

That the goddess was represented by a priestess is therefore primarily an inference, drawn largely from the impression given by the texts that sexual congress actually did occur.[2] If two love songs dedicated to Šu-Sin are indeed hierogamic texts,[3] then the inference gathers considerable support from them. In the first of them the king is repeatedly addressed by his female votary as "Bridegroom."[4] The second refers to a series of presents received from the king, which lead Falkenstein to identify the singer as a *lukur*-priestess. This office, he says, together with the references to sexual union, mark her as the earthly representative of the goddess.[5]

Correspondence of the Assyrian Empire ["University of Michigan Studies: Humanistic Series," Vol. XVIII; Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1930], pp. 157-159).

[1] Kramer, *PAPS*, p. 502, rev., col. iii, ll. 7-12.

[2] "Naturellement la déesse est représentée par une prêtresse, comme Dumuzi l'est par le roi. Ce qui est dit explicitement ll. 22-24" (Van Dijk, *BiOr*, XI, p. 86). For the lines in question, see above, p. 50, (the last 4 lines of the first quotation).

[3] See the discussion above, p. 49, n. 5; p. 50, n. 4; and p. 52, n. 2.

[4] For the text, see above, p. 51.

[5] "Damit ordnet sich ihr Verhältnis zum König mit den deutlichen Anspielungen auf die geschlechtliche Vereinigung in den Zusammenhang des

Priestesses and hierodules

Though there is considerable information about female temple personnel, it is less instructive on this question than might be supposed. There seems little doubt, for example, as to the sexual functioning of the women dedicated to Ištar.[1] The general term applied to these women, however, was equivocal: it might signify either sacred or secular accessibility.[2] In the Gilgamesh Epic, they are distinguished by the more specific titles of "votary," "pleasure-lass," and "temple-harlot,"[3] but the woman chosen to seduce Enkidu was designated by a compound of the latter two terms.[4] Schmökel may be correct, then, in his suggestion

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hieros gamos ein, bei dem die Priesterin die Göttin Baba, der König Tammuz oder eine tammuzähnliche Gottheit vertrat" (*SAHG*, p. 370). Kramer appears to look favorably on these conclusions (*ANET*, p. 496a-b, nn. 5, 11).

[1] "Die Ischtartempel, die in kaum einer Stadt Mesopotamiens fehlten, dürften Hauptplätze der kultischen Prostitution gewesen sein; beim Heiligtum der Göttin in Assur wurden Bleiplaketten mit obszönen Darstellungen gefunden" (Hartmut Schmökel, "Mesopotamien," *Kulturgeschichte des Alten Orient*, ed. Schmökel [Stuttgart: Alfred Kroner Verlag, 1961], p. 278).

[2] "Son culte est tellement associé aux prostitutions sacrées que le nom d'*ishtaritu*, 'celle d'Ishtar,' pourra signifier non seulement une hiérodule, mais aussi une courtisane" (Dhorme, *Les religions . . .*, p. 73).

[3] Speiser, *ANET*, p. 85a, ll. 165-66. Dhorme says "elles sont de trois classes," which he translates "enfermées," "filles de joie," and prostituées" (*Les religions . . .*, p. 213). Heidel proposes "girl-devotees," "prostitutes," and "courtesans" (*Gilgamesh Epic*, p. 54, ll. 165-66).

[4] *ANET*, p. 74b, l. 19 and n. 23. Jastrow noted long ago that her title marked her as "a harlot devoted to the worship of Ishtar" (*Religion . . .*, p. 475). There is no justification, however, for his later assertion that in her seduction of Enkidu "the union of the god and goddess is transferred to a human pair" (*AJSL*, XXXIII, p. 115).

that "die Grenze zwischen der niedrigsten Hierodulengruppe und der einfachen Strassendirne dürfte sich verwischt haben."[1]

In any case, it appears justifiable to hold that ordinary intercourse with temple prostitutes is to be categorically distinguished from the rite of the Sacred Marriage.[2] The former, it seems likely, was at most a variety of popular oblation deemed appropriate to the worship of Ištar,[3] while the latter appears to have been part of the state cult, and to have had certain communal objectives in view.

One hears, moreover, of another sort of female functionary, known in Akkadian as *entu* ("high-priestess") and in Sumerian as *nin*-*dingir* ("the wife of the god" or "the lady [who is] a deity").[4] She definitely was not expected to engage in popular ritual intercourse, as various omen and medical texts demonstrate.[1] Her term of office apparently might extend for many years.[2]

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[1] *Kulturgeschichte . . .*, pp. 285-86.

[2] Pallis proposes that "in the *bît aštammi* of the temple the government saw to it that the traveller as well as the denizens of Babylon could experience themselves, by celebrating coitus, Marduk and Sarpanipanitum's sacred union in marriage, the holiest of all actions, the culmination of life: to create fruitfulness in the sensual rapture of love" (*Antiquity . . .*, p. 711). However, he offers no textual or other support for this interpretation. He had suggested earlier, on the other hand, that the inhabitants of these quarters "served the citizens of the town and travellers . . . at the great religious feasts, *as on other occasions* [underlining mine]" (ibid., p. 682). Schmökel's interpretation of the popular mood during the feasts as "bacchantisches Treiben" (*Das Land Sumer*, p. 143) seems much more probable.

[3] Schmökel terms it "eine Art kultischer Handlung zu Ehren der Liebesgöttin" (*Kulturgeschichte . . .*, p. 299). Cf. van der Leeuw's very interesting apologia for this phenomenon, which he calls "cultural chastity" (*Religion in Essence . . .*, I, pp. 231-32).

[4] Saggs, *The Greatness . . .*, p. 349. Van Buren points out, however, that there are references to the *nin*-*dingir* of Baba and other female deities. The term, therefore, "must have had a more subtle significance, and implied 'the priestess appointed to take the part of the divine bride'" (*Or*, N. S., XIII, p. 63).

It was to this role that Nabonidus (555-538) consecrated his daughter, after the office had been in disuse since the time of Rim-Sin (1753-1693).[3] He was moved to this action by a sign that the Moon-god desired a "divine mistress."[4] So far as we know, the royal princess was the last person so to be installed.[5] Nonetheless, it may be noted that the functioning of the entu does bear some resemblance to the account which Herodotus gleaned from his Asian travels in the following century.[1]

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[1] Saggs, The Greatness . . ., pp. 349-50. A diagnostic manual states, for example, that "if his testicles are inflamed, if his penis is covered with sores, he has gone in to the high-priestess of his god" (ibid., p. 463). S. A. Cook noted that "the votary of Marduk is the god's wife vowed to perpetual chastity, and is therefore distinct from the devotees of Ištar. Like the ordinary courtesan, these formed a separate class and enjoyed special privileges" (The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi [London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903], p. 148).

[2] Schmökel seems to agree with Woolley with regard to "women of forty" (see above, p. 64, n. 2). He says of the entu that "sie agierten --symbolisch oder tatsächlich, das mag von Einstellung und Belieben des Fürsten abhängig gewesen sein; wir hören übrigens von 'Gottesbräuten,' die 40 Jahre amtierten--mit dem Ensi an den grossen Festen den kultischen Akt der Heiligen Hochzeit und entstammten häufig dem Königshause selbst" (Das Land Sumer, p. 139).

[3] Saggs, The Greatness . . ., p. 350. Note, however, that it was customary for fathers to devote their daughters to temple-service in all its forms (Dhorme, Les religions . . ., p. 213).

[4] Gadd, Ideas of Divine Rule . . ., pp. 58-59. Gadd sees "an Egyptian parallel in the bride of the god Amun" (ibid., p. 58, n. 6). If so, one should note the lack of any certain evidence that the latter titulary engaged in human intercourse as a part of her official functioning (see below, pp. 141-46).

[5] Van Buren, Or, N.S., XIII, p. 72.

When we come to the Assyrian references to the Sacred Marriage, it seems clear that one or both of the divine roles are now played by images.[2] Nabu and Tašmetum, for example, remain in "the bed chamber" for five days, under the watchful eye of the temple overseer.[3]

In an inventory of spoils carried off from Urartu in his eighth campaign, Sargon II (720-704) lists "1 ivory couch, a bed of silver, for the repose of his divine majesty, covered with jewels and gold."[4] The chronicle of the plundered temple furnishings begins with the "god" and "his goddess," and includes "the garments of his divine majesty" and

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[1] "On the topmost tower there is a spacious temple, and inside the temple stands a couch of unusual size, richly adorned, with a golden table by its side. There is no statue of any kind set up in the place, nor is the chamber occupied of nights by any one but a single native woman, who, as the Chaldaeans, the priests of this god, affirm, is chosen for himself by the deity out of all the women of the land. They also declare (but I do not believe it) that the god comes down in person into this chamber, and sleeps upon the couch. This is like the story told by the Egyptians of what takes place in their city of Thebes, where a woman always passes the night in the temple of the Theban Zeus. In each case the woman is said to be debarred all intercourse with men" (I, 181-82).

[2] "Dans d'autres hiérogamies, comme celle du mois d'Iyar (avril-mai), ce sont les statues de la déesse et du dieu qui s'unissent dans la chambre nuptiale qu'on appelle 'la maison du lit'" (Dhorme, Les religions . . ., p. 246).

[3] The texts are quoted above on pp. 56-57.

[4] Daniel David Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, Vol. II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927), p. 97. To be sure, the text states neither that this was a nuptial couch, nor that Sargon intended it to be used in such a way by the Assyrian deities.

"the ornaments of (their) divine majesties."[1]

Similarly, an Assyrian liturgical text gives a detailed description of the consecration of the couch of a god:

> After the appropriate offerings are presented, the officiating priestess purifies the feet of the divine image with a sprig of reed and a vessel of oil, approaches (?) the bed three times, kisses the feet of the image, and retires and sits down. She then burns cedar wood dipped in wine, places before the image the heart of a sheep wrapped in a cloth, and offers libations. Aromatic woods are consecrated and burnt, further libations and offerings are made, tables are spread for various divinities, and the ceremony concludes with a prayer for the king.[2]

Van Buren proposes further that certain references to royal garments in Assyrian letters may be taken to mean that when it was impossible for the king to perform the Sacred Marriage in person, "the distinctive garments prescribed for him to wear on the occasion were sent in his stead." In fact, however, there is no reference to hierogamy in the letters which she cites.[3]

Two kinds of reactions to these later materials may be documented. One is to see the use of images as impoverishment, and therefore to insist that there "must" still have been human representatives as well.[4] The other reaction is to view the change as a kind of refinement or purification.[1]

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[1] Luckenbill, Ancient Records . . ., pp. 96, 97.

[2] Christopher Johnston, "The Epistolary Literature of the Assyrians and Babylonians," JAOS, Vol. XVIII, Part 1 (1897), p. 154.

[3] Or, N.S., XIII, pp. 35-36. She refers to letters 21, 29, 149, 612, 667, and 1126 (ibid., p. 36, n. 1). For the texts, see Waterman, Royal Correspondence . . ., Vols. XVII and XVIII.

[4] "Dans ce rite du 'mariage sacré,' ou hiérogamie, hérité des Sumériens, le dieu et sa partenaire devaient avoir d'autres remplaçants

In a sense, these opposing reactions have in common a certain Western inability to feel religiously towards inanimate representations of deity.[2] The present writer makes no claim to have escaped the effects of this conditioning. His reading of the ancient texts does convince him, however, that one will understand ancient Near Eastern religiosity only to the degree that such inhibitions have somehow been transcended. The image was both seen and felt to include the vital presence of the divine being.[3] If then in the Sacred Marriage human representatives did come to be replaced by images, it seems nearly certain that the celebrants viewed the latter mode as having equal validity, and in unbroken continuity,

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que leurs statues: peut-être le roi, ou un grand Pontife, et une prêtresse" (Bottéro, La religion. . . , p. 117).

[1] "In the course of centuries the rite was purged of its grosser details until there remained only those spiritual elements which composed the basic conception of the great drama of the sacred marriage" (Van Buren, Or, N.S., XIII, p. 72).

[2] See above, p. 2. Oppenheim suggests further that "anti-iconic tendencies" in Western culture are rooted not only in Judeo-Christian but also in Greek thought, "and they are far from dead now. They still linger in the scholar's ambivalent attitude toward 'idols' and taint his approach to all alien religions. This influence manifests itself, mainly, by subtly shifting emphasis from less acceptable manifestations of a foreign religiosity to those which we can more readily comprehend, or at least, consider more acceptable in Western terms" (Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 184).

[3] "Fundamentally, the deity was considered present in its image if it showed certain specific features and paraphernalia and was cared for in the appropriate manner, both established and sanctified by the tradition of the sanctuary" (ibid.).

with the former one.[1] This understanding makes it unnecessary to interpret the transition in either of the above-mentioned directions.

With regard to the enactment of the hieros gamos, in summary, the evidence limits the conclusions to probabilities. It is certain that two kings played the role of the divine bridegroom in late Sumerian times. This makes it likely, though by no means certain, that others did so in other periods. The sexual cooperation of a priestess in the rite appears probable, though the lack of absolute certification for this hypothesis needs to be kept constantly in view. The act of copulation with temple prostitutes is very far outside current religious experience, to say the least. In the absence of ancient attempts to express its "intent," what one proposes about it probably ought to be branded as speculation, and made use of accordingly. It is certainly "possible" that it was viewed as assuring fertility, either directly or by a kind of cooperation with the celebration of the Sacred Marriage. What is important is that such tentative suggestions do not subtly become "probable" and then "virtually certain," without benefit of further verification.

With regard to the hieros gamos itself, some fairly definite correlations between action and expected effect are indicated in the remains. The final section of this chapter will therefore be concerned with arranging into several categories the notions which the texts suggest on this subject.

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[1] "As a rule, the Mesopotamian image does not depart from human forms and measurements, a fact which might be considered the sequel of a ritual tradition sporadically attested in monuments and literary documents according to which human beings, priests and priestesses, acted under certain circumstances--such as in the rite of the 'Sacred Marriage'--for or as gods" (Oppenheim, Forgotten Religions, ed. Ferm, p. 72).

The Issue of the Sacred Marriage

Fertility

Terms such as "fertility goddess" and "the Great Mother" have become venerated cliches in this field of study.[1] It is important therefore to emphasize that in the Sumerian hierogamic texts Dumuzi has significant fecundative powers of his own. Inanna says to him, for example:

> The lord Dumuzi is seemly for (?) the holy lap.
> Amaušumgalanna, the son-in-law of Sin.
> My lord, sweet is your increase,
> Tasty your plants (and) herbs in the plain.[2]

In another text, animal products as well as vegetation spring from his contribution to the yield of the Sacred Marriage:

> Inanna dwelt by (his) side in joy.
> Inanna rejoicing in his house,
> Utters a plea to the king:
> "Make yellow the milk for me, my bridegroom, make
>   yellow the milk [for me],
> My bridegroom, I will [drink] with you the fresh (?) milk,
> Wild bull Dumuzi, make yellow the milk for me,

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[1] Schmökel speaks, for example, of "die Vermählung des jugendlichen Gottes mit der Grossen Mutter, der Erd-, Fruchtbarkeits- und Liebesgöttin Inanna-Ischtar" (Das Land Sumer, p. 125). Cf. also E. O. James, The Ancient Gods: The History and Diffusion of Religion in the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961), chap. III, "The Mother-Goddess and the Young God."

[2] Kramer, PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 500, rev., ll. 16-19.

My bridegroom, I will [drink with you] the fresh (?) milk.
The milk of the goat [make flow (?) in] the sheepfold for me,
With the . . . cheese fill (?) my holy churn."[1]

In the following text, on the other hand, it is clearly Inanna who is addressed, and whose abounding and multiform gifts of fertility are sought through the agency of the king:

May he make productive the fields like the farmer,
May he multiply the sheepfolds like a trustworthy shepherd,
Under his reign may there be plants, may there be grain,
At the river, may there be overflow,
In the field may there be late-grain,
In the marshland may the fish (and) birds make much chatter(?),
In the canebrake may the "old" reeds, the young reeds grow high,
In the steppe may the *mašgur*-trees grow high,
In the forests may the deer and the wild goats multiply,
May the watered garden produce honey (and) wine,
In the trenches may the lettuce and the cress grow high,
In the palace may there be long life,

Into the Tigris and Euphrates may flood water be brought,
On their banks may the grass grow high, may the meadows
  be covered,
May the holy queen of vegetation pile high the grain heaps
  and mounds,
Oh my queen, queen of the universe, the queen who encompasses
  the universe,
May he enjoy long days [at your holy] lap.[2]

A fascinating change of imagery is to be found in still another text, where fertility is associated with suckling, rather than with copulation:

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[1] *PAPS*, CVII, 6, p. 507, obv., col. iii, ll. 15-23. For other passages from this text, see above, pp. 46-47.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 502, obv., col. ii, ll. 19-30; rev., col. iii, ll. 1-6. Since l. 17 had asked that the king be given hegemony "over all Sumer and Akkad," one is probably justified in supposing the historical ruler to be the object of the request, and therefore here a participant in the *hieros gamos*.

Oh lady, your breast is your field,
Inanna, your breast is your field,
Your wide wide field which "pours out" plants,
Your wide field which "pours out" grain,
Water flowing from on high--(for) the lord--bread from on high,
Water flowing, flowing from on high--(for) the lord--bread, bread from on high,
Pour (?) out for the "commanded" lord,
I will drink it from you.[1]

In the Gudea-text, Cylinder B, it is again the god, Ningirsu, who is approached in prayer and through the agency of his subordinate deities:

Dass die grossen Getreidefelder gedeihen,
dass die Kanäle von Lagasch hohes Flutwasser bringen,
dass in der Steppe, die für ihren Herrn (Ningirsu) geschaffen ist,
im Gu^{c}edenna (die Getreidegottheiten) Aschnan, Kusu und Pasikil
in den Saatfurchen das Haupt stolz zum Himmel erheben.

dass (des Gu^{c}edenna) gute Felder Weizen, Emmer und Hülsenfrüchte bringen,
dass sich hohe Getreidehaufen, der Ertrag des Ortes Lagasch, erheben,
lässt (Gudea) den Katasterleiter Enlils, den Landmann des Gu^{c}edenna, Gischbare,
beim Herrn Ningirsu seines göttlichen Amtes walten.[2]

The reference to the "bed-place" in a subsequent passage may allow us to suppose that these desired blessings are in some measure derivative from the Sacred Marriage. In general, however, direct hierogamic references occupy a remarkably small space in the Gudea texts.[1] Here is the one connected reference:

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[1] PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 504, ll. 69-76. Kramer comments: "The composition closes with a plea to Inanna, perhaps by the king himself, to give him her breast from which he will drink as a symbol of the fertility of the land" (ibid.). There is an earlier reference to the preparation of a "fruitful bed" (ibid., l. 50), but this figure is not pursued in the remainder of the poem.

[2] SAHG, pp. 174-75.

> Ningirsu hat seiner Stadt Lagasch
> . . . , einen guten Ort gegeben!
>
> In sein "Betthaus," den gefürchteten Ort des Hauses,
> hat (Gudea) das Bett gebracht:
> Alle Länder haben wie (ängstliche) Vogel in ihren *Wegen*
> vor dem Sohne Enlils Angst.
>
> Dass sich die Kanäle mit dauerndfliessendem Wasser füllen,
> dass in den Teichen Karpfen und *Barsche* seien,
> das der Fischereiaufseher und der Deichgraf alles regle,
> dass die reichen Wasser das Getreide vermehren,
> dass sich hohe Getreidehaufen, der Ertrag des Ortes Lagasch,
> erheben,
>
> dass die Hürden, die Pferche gemacht werden,
> dass die guten Mutterschafe Lämmer werfen,
> dass die Zuchtwidder die guten Mutterschafe *bespringen*,
> dass die guten Kühe Kalber tragen,
> dass unter ihnen der Bulle laut brülle,
> (13 lines omitted)
> trat der Stadtfürst, der das Eninnu erbaute,
> trat Gudea, der Stadtfürst von Lagasch,
> zum Herrn Ningirsu (mit diesen Geschenken) ein.[2]

A similar caution needs to be exercised in analyzing the text which recounts the *hieros gamos* between Inanna and Iddin-Dagan. The following passage breathes a lively sense of dependence upon her on the part of human, animal, and plant life. It does not, however, connect this mood specifically with the later celebration of the divine nuptials:

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[1] "Nur ganz kurz, mitten in einem Preislied auf die Grösse des neuen Heiligtums, wird dann (B XVII 1-3) [see above, p. 49 and n. 4] auf die Vereinigung Ningirsus mit Baba, das zentrale Geschehen im kultischen Festkalender der Stadt, hingewiesen" (*SAHG*, p. 374).

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.

Die Manner reinigen sich, die Frauen [schmücken sich],
der Stier im Joche [hebt] den Kopf nach ihr,
die Schafe im Pferch [lagern] sich auf die Erde.

Das zahlreiche Getier Schakans, die Lebewesen der Steppe,
alle Vierfüssler unter dem weiten Himmel,
Obstpflanzung und Garten, Beet und grünendes Röhricht,
die Fische des Teiches, die Vogel des Himmels,
alles wartet auf meine Herrin, wo es (des Nachts) ruht,
die Lebewesen alle, die zahlreichen Menschen beugen vor ihr
  das Knie.

Der Herrin bringen die Berufenen, die Alten,
zu üppiger Speise und Trank reichliche Gaben,
meiner Herrin beruhigt sich alles in ihrem Lande,
Tanze führt man im Lande (wie) bei Festen auf,
der junge Mann freut sich mit der Gattin.[1]

From this historical point forward, the texts provide only brief and largely cryptic allusions to the hieros gamos. One may properly suppose that it continued to be associated with the assurance of fertility, but he does so in the absence of direct documentation.

Before moving to the next theme, some comment may appropriately be offered on the scholarly discussions of the present one. It is generally asserted that the fertility envisioned as the issue of the Sacred Marriage encompassed the whole biological realm.[2] Sidney Smith, however, proposes a much more restricted view of the rite:

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[1] SAHG, pp. 93-94. For the expressly hierogamic portion of the song, see above, pp. 53-54.

[2] "The sacred marriage was celebrated in order that, by a species of sympathetic magic, the resulting fruitfulness might be extended to the people and the whole land, that is to say, that fertility and abundance might be bestowed upon the head of every family, his flocks and herds, and the land he cultivated" (Van Buren, Or, N.S. XIII, p. 1). Bottéro, in describing the "esprit" of Babylonian religion, stresses the "importance du rite de hiérogamie, ou mariage sacré, au cours duquel le dieu et la déesse s'unissent, symbolisant et causant à la fois la fécondité des hommes, des bêtes et des plantes" (La religion . . ., p. 4,

> It ought never to have been connected with the fertility of meadow and field; the hypothesis that it had to do with childbirth in the cottage of the peasant or the palace of the prince is romantic, but unlikely, in view of what is known about the enâtu. It had to do with fruit-growing, not agriculture proper.[1]

The texts which have recently been passed in review certainly seem to present a broader claim than this. In one respect, however, his strictures seem justified. Nowhere in the texts quoted above is the fertility of human wombs asserted as an outcome of the divine union.[2]

There is, finally, the richly interpretative writing of Thorkild Jacobsen to be accounted for once more. Proceeding from "the tenets of mythopoeic logic," he has made the following suggestion:

> Therefore, by being like, by enacting the role of, a force in nature, a god, man could in the cult enter into and clothe himself with the identity of these powers, with the identity of the gods, and through his own actions, when thus identified, cause the powers involved to act as he would have them act. By identifying himself with Dumuzi, the king is Dumuzi; and

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n. 2). Schmökel supposes that the hierogamy coincided with the winter rains. "Dann erwacht das Leben auf dem Acker, bei den Herden, bei den Menschen in Land und Stadt, dann heben Liebe Zeugung und Geburt wieder an; Symbol dessen und zugleich Garantie der wiederhergestellten göttlichen Ordnung ist . . . jener Akt, der religionsgeschichtlich Heilige Hochzeit heisst" (Das Land Sumer, p. 125). Pallis, commenting on the Gudea text, is most expansive of all: "It is as a result of the marriage union that day dawns and the sun rises on the lands and that rich fields presaging full storehouses are secured to the city-state of Lagash, that the vegetation grows green, that women give birth, that cattle and wild animals drop their young, that birds brood" (Antiquity . . ., p. 690).

[1] MRAK, p. 53. See below, p. 100, n. 1.

[2] As to the claim that the king was the offspring of a hieros gamos, see below, pp. 93-96.

> similarly the priestess is Inanna--our texts clearly state this. Their marriage is the marriage of the creative powers of spring.[1]

As already indicated, the present writer is not so convinced that the identity of king and priestess with Dumuzi and Inanna is stated "clearly."[2] What emerges even less clearly from the texts is their consciousness of identity with "the creative powers of spring," and especially their capacity to cause these powers to act. In short, there lurks in these statements a considerable tendency to modern analysis and abstraction. By their extraneous nature, it is here contended, such techniques tend naturally to overstate what the participants themselves might consciously have felt.

Jacobsen expresses just this sort of reservation concerning his own search for meaning at another point. Seeking again for the expression of the sense of mysterium tremendum,[3] he suggests that "faint overtones of awe and wonder at the miracle of conception are possibly present" in hierogamic passages, but draws back almost at once from his own suggestion.[4]

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[1] Intellectual Adventure, p. 215. This position is more recently reiterated in BANE, p. 273.

[2] See above, p. 85.

[3] See above, p. 35 and n. 1.

[4] History of Religions, I, 2, pp. 207-208. "But if in these passages overtones of awe and wonder at the miracle of new life are really present and have not merely been read into the language used by us, they are likely to have been fleeting and not widely shared. A related text reasserts the general climate of easy intimacy and familiarity when it sees as the purpose of setting up the bed for the rite that the god "be fondled" (ibid., p. 208).

The king as divine filiation

The frequent use of theogenetic names and forms of address has led a few interpreters to assume that the kings of Mesopotamia claimed divine descent.[1] Thus Lugalzaggisi (ca. 2400) styled himself "son born by Nisaba,"[2] and Gudea professed to Gatumdug: "I have no mother, thou art my mother, I have no father, thou art my father."[3] A millennium-and-a-half later, Aššurbanipal (668-626) declared to Ninlil: "I am thy servant, Aššurbanipal, whom thy hands formed without father and mother, whom thou, Queen, caused to reach maturity."[4]

There is a much larger body of opinion which contends rather that such expressions are in some sense figurative.[5] This position is founded on several factors. A given king, for example, might claim to be the son of several deities.[1] Or, as in the case of Gudea's expression, a single god might be saluted as both father and mother.[2] Finally, some rulers to whom divine filiation was attributed also identified their human progenitors.[3]

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[1] "Thus the king is the fruit of a hieros gamos, in which in the cult the king and queen undoubtedly performed the divine functions" (Engnell, Studies, pp. 16-17).

[2] Ibid., p. 16, n. 5.

[3] Ibid., n. 7.

[4] Ibid.

[5] "Sous le titre 'Le dieu parent' nous avons montré, dans La religion assyro-babylonienne, que le sens métaphorique s'imposait pour des noms signifiant: 'tel dieu est mon père,' 'telle déesse est ma mère' (p. 196 ss)" (Dhorme, Les religions . . . , p. 19). Professor T. Fish of Manchester adds this interesting bit of interpretation: "When, shortly before Ur III, Gudea of Lagash says that he is the 'child born of' the goddess Gatumdug the verb used is that used also to express the making of a statue. So it may well be that the phrases used by the kings of Ur III which we have quoted mean no more than that the deities have made the king what he is,which is what earlier rulers were fond of stating in greater detail" ("Some Aspects of Kingship in the Sumerian City and Kingdom of Ur," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1 [1951], p. 42).

The most common interpretation of this imagery, therefore, is to see in it the language of adoption.[4] Labat says of Gudea's much-quoted statement that "le prince renonce, en la prononçant, à ses parents naturels et reconnaît comme seul parent la déesse de la cité. Ces mots sonnent comme certains promesses de renonciation que l'on trouve fréquemment dans les contrats d'adoption."[1] The royal reason for seeking such "adoption," it may be supposed, was analogous to the reasons which prompted adoptions of the usual sort. What was sought in both cases were those benefits of protection and material support which might fairly be expected to accrue to such a relationship.[2]

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[1] "Der König bezeichnet sich gerade in Mesopotamien gern zugleich als Sohn verschiedener Gottheiten, was den adoptiven Charakter dieses Sohnesverhältnisses besonders deutlich macht. So nennt sich Gudea nicht nur Sohn der Göttin Gatumdag, sondern weiss sich auch zugleich zu den Göttinnen Ninsun, Bata und Sansche in einem Sohnesverhältnis befindlich. Ähnlich bezeichnet sich Hammurapi in der Präambel zu seinen Gesetzeskodex als Sohn Sins (II, 13f.), Sohn Dagans (IV, 17ff.), Bruder des Gottes Zamama, des Sohnes Enlils (II, 56), während er in der Regel sonst als der Sohn des babylonischen Hauptgottes Marduk angesehen wird" (Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, "Kult und König im Altertum des Vorderen Orients," Das Altertum, Vol. V, No. 2 [1959], pp. 74-75).

[2] "The unrealistic projection of both parents in one divine person accentuates the figurative meaning of the expressions" (Frankfort, Kingship, p. 300). Jacobsen notes that "the metaphor used by Gudea is still alive in Iraq: It is not unusual for a workman who brings a petition or complaint to his superior to introduce it with the words: 'Thou art my father and my mother'" ("The Concept of Divine Parentage of the Ruler in the Stele of the Vultures," JNES, Vol. II, No. 2 [1943], p. 120, n. 13).

[3] Eannatum, for example, named his father and grandfather (Frankfort, Kingship, p. 301). See below, pp. 95 ff. Jacobsen says that "in Mesopotamia conflicting claims to descent from human parents, from divine parents, and even from a variety of divine parents are allowed to stand unreconciled in inscriptions of the same ruler" (JNES, II, 1, p. 119).

[4] "Nous avons vu que les liens unissant le roi au dieu ne sont pas ceux d'une filiation effective. C'est, en réalité, par une sorte d'adoption que le roi, après sa naissance, est reconnu par les dieux comme un enfant divin" (Labat, Le caractère . . . , p. 63).

There is one text, as Jacobsen has shown, in which the connection between the gods and the king is undeniably more than adoptive:[3]

> Nin-Girsu(k) implanted the seed of E-Anna(k)-tum in the womb and Nin-hursaga(k) bore him.
>
> Over E-Anna(k)-tum Nin-hursaga(k) rejoiced, In-anna(k) took him on the arm and named him E-Anna(k)-In-anna(k)-Ib-gal-(a)kaka-tum

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[1] Labat, Le caractère . . ., p. 63. He had seemed earlier to claim more than this: "Il paraît ressortir de ces différents passages que le roi n'était pas, en réalité, procréé par un dieu ni conçu par une déesse, mais que, fils de parents mortels, il était avant sa naissance formé par la divinité dans le sein même de sa mère" (ibid., p. 60). Frankfort says of him that "he wavers curiously in the interpretation of the phenomena, sometimes stressing the humanity, sometimes the divinity, of the king" (Kingship, p. 405, n. 16). Jacobsen probably comes closer to the reason for the variation when he comments that "Labat's treatment of the notion of divine parentage . . . gives a good impression of its general fluidity and vagueness" (JNES, II, 1, p. 119, n. 11).

[2] Jacobsen objects, specifically against Labat: "It has always, however, remained a serious difficulty that these acts are nowhere else in Sumero-Akkadian literature attested as acts of adoption" (ibid., p. 120). It is not certain that the latter's language necessarily requires "formal acts of adoption" (ibid.). If so, then perhaps it should be specified that it is only the imagery of adoption contracts which here finds an echo.

[3] "Here we shall endeavor to show that the most explicit passage dealing with these acts, the Stele of the Vultures, obv. iv 9-14, occurs in a general context which is very definitely concerned with the notion of physical parenthood and not with that of parenthood by adoption; the events described are E-Anna(k)-tum's birth and the reception accorded him by his divine parents and relations" (ibid., p. 120).

> (i.e., "Worthy of the E-Anna(k) of In-anna(k) of Ib-gal"), she sat him down on Nin-hursaga(k)'s knee for her, and Nin-hursaga(k) suckled him.
>
> Over E-Anna(k)-tum, the seed implanted in the womb by Nin-Girsu(k), Nin-Girsu(k) rejoiced.[1]

Frankfort proposes to deal with this text on the grounds that it "represents an inexplicable deviation from the usual concept of kingship." Therefore, he suggests, the better alternative is to "admit that, in view of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, the literal translation cannot be correct."[2]

In view of the stele's great antiquity, however, this admission seems hardly necessary. An hypothesis which supposed the text to mean what it says would seem more sound. One cannot, to be sure, incorporate such an interpretation into a consistent pattern of Mesopotamian belief. That such consistency existed is precisely the assumption which this bit of evidence must call into question.[3]

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[1] JNES, II, 1, p. 121.

[2] Kingship, p. 301. Approached on this basis, "the text may then have a ritual or symbolic meaning which escapes us" (ibid.).

[3] Although Jacobsen's article was designed to counter the "adoption" interpretation, he does not really propose that it be replaced with a thoroughgoing theory of physical generation. His position is apparently found rather in the following statement: "The notion that the ruler is of divine descent is found in both Mesopotamia and Egypt. But, whereas in Egypt this notion has been rationalized to a high degree of clarity and unity, it remains in Mesopotamia characteristically vague and fluid" (JNES, II, 1, p. 119).

Hieros Gamos and Vergöttlichung

There is, finally, the phenomenon of "divinization" to be considered in connection with the Sacred Marriage. It is attested only for a sort of middle period of Mesopotamian history, extending from the latter part of the Sargonid dynasty down into the early Kassite era (that is, from ca. 2150 to 1550).[1] The dynasty known as Ur III seems to have developed the practice to its most elaborated extent.[2]

An understanding of this phenomenon has been sought, as it were, at the mythical level: the "divinized" kings represented a transitional stage between ruling gods and ruling men.[3] At the opposite extreme, divinization has been explained in strictly human and historical terms, as an outcome of the extraordinary military prowess of the early Akkadian rulers.[1]

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[1] For the details, cf. Frankfort, Kingship, p. 224. A more complete listing is contained in Dhorme, Les religions . . . , p. 20. Conteneau writes that "by the end of the Assyrian and during the neo-Babylonian periods, the practice had long been obsolete, surviving only in the form of a curious conventional claim to be the son of this or that goddess . . . We should see in this merely a distant memory of the divine origin of monarchy and divine selection, and an assertion that divine power had endowed a king with every perfection from before his birth" (Everyday Life . . . , pp. 116-17).

[2] "The sign for deity is written before their names; the names of the kings occur on lists of 'offerings' together with the names of other deities; the names of kings form part of many personal names; the kings have feasts and shrines as deities have" (Fish, BJRL, XXXIV, 1, p. 40).

[3] "This question of the deification of kings should not be treated apart from the tradition that is the basis of the introduction in the king-lists to the dynasties known to be historical. Gods ruled on earth; then divine, immortal creatures, brought to an end by the Flood; the survivor of that was the last of the immortals. The legendary kings, 'heroes,' were half divine and lived beyond the spell of ordinary men. The dynasties of human men began while some kings were still allowed supernatural lifetimes; then there was deification of kings of Sumer and Akkad till the end of the Isin Dynasty" (Smith, MRAK, pp. 50-51). This theory, while attractively simple, does not seem to account adequately for the many non-divinized rulers during the period in question. The same difficulty arises in connection with Theodor Gaster's position on

The proposal has also been made that the divinization of kings and the hieros gamos may be related, since the extant testimonies to the two phenomena belong generally to the same historical period.[2] It is advanced very tentatively, however, even by theorists ordinarily inclined to be more bold in their claims.[3] This reserve is entirely appropriate, since in general the hierogamic texts themselves do not refer to the

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this subject. "When we find ancient Mesopotamian kings (e.g. Shulgi of Ur) receiving divine honors either in their lifetimes or after their deaths, and when we find the sign for 'god' prefixed occasionally to the writing of their names, we are not to infer that they were promoted to a higher than mortal status; all that is really implied is that the preterpunctual aspect of their office was duly and formally acknowledged" (Numen, I, 3, p. 190). [See above, pp. 11-12, for the statement of the theoretical context of this claim.]

[1] "Während derartige Wendungen den alten sumerischen Königsinschriften fremd sind, sehen wir dank der Zeugnisse der Inschriften der Dynastie Akkade soweit klar, dass diese Auffassung auf dem Boden der akkadischen Schicht erwachsen ist. . . . Nachdem die Zeit der neusumerischen Renaissance die in der akkadischen Epoche vollzogene Umformung der staatlichen Organisation in den Grundzügen übernommen hatte, war die Grundlage gegeben, dass die Vorstellung vom göttergleichen König auch im Bereich der sumerischen Welt aufgenommen wurde" (Falkenstein, SAHG, p. 35).

[2] "The festival of the marriage of gods and goddesses in Ayaru, the festivals in which a goddess brought a king into her bower, or 'raised' a king, the rite of the marriage of the enitu and the god, all seem to be aspects of a single phenomenon during the period in which deification of kings was common" (Smith, MRAK, p. 52). Cf. Frankfort, Kingship, p. 297.

[3] "Ob der mystisch-magische Ritus des hieros gamos, der 'Heiligen Hochzeit' vom Ursprung an in dieses Bild gehört, lässt sich nicht mit Sicherheit sagen" (Schmökel, Kulturgeschichte . . . , p. 87).

king's exaltation above human status.[1] There is nevertheless one text, involving the Isin king Lipit-Ištar, which seems to connect divinization with the Sacred Marriage:[2]

> Anu, seinen Blick, den er für lange (Lebens)zeit auf ihn
> richtete, zu dem Hirten rechtmässig erhob er,
> zu ^{G}Uraš, seinem geliebten Kinde, treulich fürwahr sprach er:
>
> . . . .
>
> "Die Gerechtigkeit, du seiest ihr Mann, deine Helferin sei sie:
> während Recht aus dem Innern hervorgeht, wie der Sonnengott
> dastehend!
> ^{G}Ištar ist fürwahr deine Geliebte, das Leben verlängere sie dir;
> der gütige ^{G}Schutzgeist der Herrschaft des Königtums
> stelle sich treulich dir zur Seite!"[3]

It is certainly possible that Lipit-Ištar is here "disguised" in the figure of Uraš,[4] since the king is indeed the subject of the opening song in the cycle, where his name is preceded by the divine determinative.[5] No other such text, however, has thus far been recovered.

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[1] See above, however, pp. 51-52.

[2] "It shows how this king was deified--as a preliminary to a sacred marriage with Ishtar--by being fused with Urash, a fertility god" (Frankfort, _Kingship_, p. 297). "The construction of the song cycle suggests that it was recited just before the king entered into the presence of the goddess; merging with the god Urash he was raised, as it were, to her level" (_ibid._, p. 298).

[3] Heinrich Zimmern, _König Lipit-Ištar's Vergöttlichung: Ein altsumerisches Lied_ ("Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königl. Sachsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig: Philologisch-historische Klasse," Vol. LXVIII, No. 5; Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1916), pp. 17-19, II, ll. 35-36, 45-48.

[4] "Dass aber hierbei mit dem 'Gotte Uraš' nicht Gott Uraš selbst, sondern verhüllt gleichfalls der in die Stellung des Gottes Uraš erhobene, schon bei Lebzeiten vergöttlicht gedacht menschliche König Lipit-Ištar gemeint ist, lehrt unzweideutig die ganze übrige Ausdrucksweise in diesem Liede" (_ibid._, p. 3).

[5] _Ibid._, pp. 13-15.

The determination of the king's destiny

What appears much more certain, at any rate, is that the Sacred Marriage texts quite generally concern themselves with a fixing of the king's lot.[1] Several of the texts already quoted include clear statements of such an intent.[2] Nowhere, however, is the issue so fully explored as in the following text:

> May the Lord whom you have called to (your) heart,
> The king, your beloved husband, enjoy long days at your holy
>   lap, the sweet,
> Give him a reign favorable (and) glorious,
> Give him the throne of kingship on its enduring foundation,
> Give him the people-directing scepter, the staff (and) the crook,
> Give him an enduring crown, a diadem which ennobles (?) the head,
> From (where) the sun rises, to (where) the sun sets,
> From south to north,
> From the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea.
> From (where grows) the halub-tree to (where grows) the cedar,
> Over all Sumer and Akkad give him the staff (and) the crook,
> May he exercise the shepherdship of the black-heads (wherever)
>   they dwell.[3]

With this, one may perhaps connect Oppenheim's suggestion that Ištar became a kind of "Lady Luck" in her association with the Mesopotamian kings.[1] It is possibly this theme, in short, which was the most pervasive and long-lived of any associated with the *hieros gamos* in the Land of the Two Rivers.

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[1] Pallis' reconstruction interprets the hieros gamos as "a third form for the determination of destiny," but limits it to having "a direct effect on the fertility of meadow and field, on childbirth in the cottage of the peasant and the palace of the prince, on the calving of the cows, on the multiplication of all living things" (BAF, pp. 247-48). On the scope of the hierogamic fertility results, see above, p. 91.

[2] See above, pp. 47, 50, 54, 57, 83 (?), and 87.

[3] Kramer, PAPS, CVII, 6, p. 502, obv., col. ii, ll. 7-18.

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[1] *Ancient Mesopotamia*, pp. 205-206. Dhorme likewise notes that "c'est Ishtar qui, par son amour, tire Sargon d'Accad de sa condition modeste pour l'asseoir sur le trône. C'est elle qui va chercher Assurnaṣir-apli dans les montagnes inconnues pour l'élever au pastorat des peuples et lui confier le sceptre d'Assyrie. Les hommes qui sont l'objet de son amour, elle les éleve au pouvoir. Elle est 'celle qui donne le sceptre, le trône, les années de règne à tous les rois'"(*Les religions . . .*, p. 73).

CHAPTER III

THE LAND OF THE TWO KINGDOMS

Patternism and Phenomenology Along the Nile

It has been noted earlier that the diffusionist hypothesis concerning ancient Near Eastern religious life began with a view of Egypt as the fountainhead of religion and civilization in general.[1] S. H. Hooke demurred from this position in favor of Mesopotamian influences,[2] an interpretation which in fact is more in keeping with the present state of scholarly opinion.[3]

Nonetheless, Brandon has demonstrated that in the first volume of essays edited by Hooke,[4] "the view that the pharaonic kingship of Egypt had powerfully influenced the ideas and institutions of neighboring peoples was accepted as virtually axiomatic."[1] The appeal of such an axiom may readily be understood: the theory of "divine kingship" was maintained in Egypt with a clarity and consistency to be found nowhere else in the ancient Near East.[2] Ergo, the "Pattern" must also be found there in its most full-bodied expression.

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[1] See above, p. 16.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[3] Cf. Frankfort, "The Influence of Mesopotamia on Egypt Towards the End of the Fourth Millennium B.C.," *The Birth of Civilization . . .*, pp. 121-36. The evidences, summarized in a table on pp. 134-35, consist mainly of Mesopotamian objects (cylinder seals) or motifs (composite animals) found in Egypt. It is Frankfort's thesis, however, that these influences were neither dominant nor lasting: "It [Egypt] mostly transformed what it borrowed and after a time rejected even these modified derivations" (*ibid.*, p. 135).

[4] *MAR*.

The truth is rather more inconvenient: efforts to induce the pattern from the Egyptian materials occasion far more difficulty than in the case of Mesopotamia.[3] The intention here is to examine these attempts in the case of one element in the pattern, the hieros gamos.

Before proceeding further with that task, it seems useful to record several commonly accepted generalizations concerning the ancient

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[1] "The Myth and Ritual Position Critically Considered," MRAK, p. 265. He cites statements to this effect by Hooke himself, F. J. Hollis, W. O. E. Oesterley, and E. O. James, but notes that the Egyptologist, A. M. Blackman, suggests that the pattern was not native to Egypt by rather possibly imported from Syria (ibid., n. 2). Further attributions to Egyptian influence are cited from subsequent writings by James (ibid., p. 271, n. 1).

[2] See below, p. 107.

[3] "Although, by ranging through the whole course of Egyptian history, a number of instances were found which had a certain degree of correspondence to certain moments of the hypothetical 'ritual-pattern,' nowhere was it shown that there was a regular annual festival in Egypt which reproduced this 'pattern' in its essential entirety" (Brandon, MRAK, pp. 269-70). Frankfort had earlier put the matter more forcefully: "Essential features of the Mesopotamian New Year celebration are without parallel in Egypt: there is no atonement, no recital of the creation myth, no sacred marriage, no determination of destiny. Neither in spirit nor in the actual details of the performance did the New Year festivals in the two countries resemble one another--let alone conform to a common pattern" (The Problem . . ., p. 17). Elsewhere, he argued further that whereas in Mesopotamia the king represented Tammuz in the Sacred Marriage, the corresponding Egyptian god was Osiris: "There is no ritual of the sacred marriage of Osiris, and Pharaoh never in his lifetime embodies Osiris" (Proceedings, p. 100).

Egyptian world-view. Basic to all the others is the presupposition that both the cosmos and the social order are characterized by stability.[1] It seems reasonable to have inferred such a world-view from the isolated, protected symmetry of the Nile Valley, with its unfailing annual gift of renewed fertility.[2] The inference had, moreover, been bolstered at the dawn of recorded history by the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Thus there began a series of dynasties which were to maintain the impression of nearly-unbroken continuity for three millennia.[3]

The Egyptian lived, therefore, in the presence of an earthly ruler who embodied and guaranteed the continued orderliness (*ma^{c}at*) of his environment.[4] It is at least in keeping with this continuity that the distinctive mark of Egyptian theology was its true conservatism. That is, gods and theories about them were seldom lost or abandoned; rather, they were variously combined into an increasingly eclectic and often seemingly incompatible complex of beliefs and practices.[1]

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[1] Frankfort speaks of "a feature rooted deeply in the Egyptian mentality: the touchstone for all that was really significant was its permanence" (*Ancient Egyptian Religion: An Interpretation* [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961], p. 49). Alan Gardiner points to "one of the most characteristic traits of the Egyptian habit of mind, the extraordinary attachment to the traditional as opposed to the actual, in fact a conservatism of expression without parallel elsewhere in the world" (*Egypt of the Pharaohs: An Introduction* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961], p. 56).

[2] Cf. Frankfort, *Kingship*, p. 4.

[3] Cf. John A. Wilson, *The Culture of Ancient Egypt* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 43-44. Dates offered in this chapter have been taken largely from *BANE*, pp. 220-224. These are substantially and often precisely paralleled in Wilson, *ibid.*, pp. 319-20; George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele, *When Egypt Ruled the East* (rev. by Keith C. Seele; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 274-75; and Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, pp. 439-53. For post-Alexandrine dates, use has been made of a list prepared by George Steindorff, and summarized in Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient Past: The Archaeological Background of Judaism and Christianity* (2nd. ed.; Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 245, n. 1.

[4] Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 49. The vizier Ptah-Hotep, of the Fifth Dynasty

To these observations, there may be added two others already put forward in different connections. The Egyptians, at least through most of their history, belonged to the world of "mythopoeic thought."[2] Consequently, it may properly be supposed that the images and symbols of

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(*ca*. 2450), says of *ma^{c}at* that "Justice . . . has not been disturbed since the time of him who made it . . . the strength of justice is that it lasts, and a man may say: 'It is the property of my father'" (*ANET*, p. 412b). One reads in the Pyramid Texts: "Heaven was in satisfaction; the earth was in joy, (after) they heard that N. had put truth [in the place of error]" (Samuel A. B. Mercer, *The Pyramid Texts in Translation and Commentary* [New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1952], Vol. I, #1775a-b. Cf. also Mercer's commentary on these lines in Vol. III. Queen Hatshepsut (1484-1469) says of Re: "I have made bright the truth which he loved, [I] know that he liveth by it (the truth); it is my bread, I eat of its brightness" (*ARE*, II, #299).

[1] "Hathor and Isis were thus considered as the same person, while Amun of Karnak, Min of Coptos, and later even Khnum of Elephantine were combined into a single divinity" (Steindorff and Seele, *When Egypt . .* , p. 143). "C'est une difficulté de plus pour l'historien, qui, le plus souvent, ignore tout de l'exégèse subtile par laquelle les sages du temps vidaient ces éléments erratiques de leur sens premier et les incorporaient à leurs conceptions d'alors" (Étienne Drioton et Jacques Vandier, *L'Égypte* ["Les peuples de l'Orient Méditerranéen," Vol. II; 3rd ed. rev.; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952], p. 64).

[2] See above, pp. 3-6. R. T. Rundle Clark writes: "The Egyptians belonged to the pre-Greek era; for them there was no dichotomy [between religious and non-religious spheres]. The gods were everywhere, the king was the essential priest and all acts were played out against a background of divine patterns. Gods, men, animals, plants and physical phenomena all belonged to the same great order. There were no distinct

the gods were experienced as manifestations of the divine reality itself.[1]

The foregoing points are of considerable significance in assessing Egyptian religiosity. The average man's main opportunity for contact with the gods was afforded by those festivals during which the divine images came forth from their sacred enclosures.[2] On such occasions, human, animal, and iconic representatives of the divine beings functioned together in the reenactment of the mythic dramas.[3]

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realms of being. Conception, germination, sickness or chemical change were just as much god-directed as the motions of the stars or the beginnings of the world" (Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt [New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1960], p. 26). In another place he adds: "Mythology was not the same thing as the telling of tales. It was the explanation of the universe by a believer in the Egyptian religion" (ibid., p. 267).

[1] See above, pp. 84-85. Wilson sets the case for such realism within a kind of pragmatic framework: "The image or the animal was a representative of divinity or was divinity itself. I mean that divinity would be present in his place of manifestation whenever his business placed him there, and his business placed him there when the act of worship before the image called him into residence. So that the image did act for and as the god whenever the worshipper addressed himself to the image. In that sense, the image was the god for all working purposes" (Intellectual Adventure, p. 64). See "The Daily Ritual in the Temple," ANET, pp. 325a-326a.

[2] "Mais les fêtes, qui sont toutes processionnelles en Égypte, restent les grandes et fréquentes occasions de contact entre le peuple entier et les images saintes. Alors ces images sortent des lieux purs . . . Une communion s'établit par la vue, même lointaine, entre elles et la foule croyante" (Maurice Alliot, "Le culte d'Horus à Edfou au temps des Ptolémées," Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, Vol. CXXXVII, No. 1 [1950], pp. 60-61). A very similar description is offered by H. W. Fairman, "Worship and Festivals in an Egyptian Temple," BJRL, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1 (1954), pp. 174, 201-202. For a Middle Kingdom dramatic text, see ARE, I, #661-669.

[3] See below, pp. 118-29.

The Divinity That Hedged A King

The divine representative par excellence was the reigning Pharaoh, who was thought of, during most of Egyptian history, as the offspring of a god.[1] This belief is abundantly evidenced in the descriptive and nominative imagery employed by the various monarchs. The phrase, "son of Re," appears at least as early as the Fourth Dynasty (*ca*. 2565-2440).[2] In the titles of Sesostris III (1878-1843) and thereafter, the terminology became much more explicitly physical.[3] The titulature was further enlarged in the Eighteenth through the Twentieth Dynasties (1570-1065), when the claim to divine filiation provided the ruler's individual name.[4]

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[1] "For, according to the Egyptians, their monarchs were actually begotten by the god Ammon, who assumed for the time being the form of the reigning king, and in that disguise had intercourse with the queen" (Frazer, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings* [London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1911], Vol. II, p. 131). Cf. Helmuth Jacobsohn, *Die dogmatische Stellung des Königs in der Theologie der alten Ägypter* ("Ägyptologische Forschungen," ed. Alexander Scharff, Vol. VIII; Glückstadt-Hamburg: Verlag J. J. Augustin, 1939), p. 13; and Wilson, *Intellectual Adventure*, pp. 81-82.

[2] *ARE*, II, #187.

[3] "The pharaoh was believed to be in body the very flesh of the gods. As early as the time of Sesostris III, we meet with the expression 'son of his body,' and it occurs very often after that time. He was also called 'son of his procreation.' The god said to him, 'thou art the son of my body whom I have begotten.' The king's body was called 'divine body,' and he himself was called 'the bodily son of Rē'" (Mercer, *The Religion of Ancient Egypt* [London: Luzac & Co., Ltd., 1949], p. 250).

[4] "But 'Son of Ra' was not dropped; Aah-mes (child of Aah) was also 'Son of Ra, of his body,' and so with Thoth-mes. A feeling of redundancy did not prevent a Ra-meses from styling himself 'Son of Ra, of his body, Ra-begot-him'" (Colin Campbell, *The Miraculous Birth of King Amon-Hotep III and other Egyptian Studies* [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1912], pp. 4-5).

The literary and monumental accounts of the divine birth of the Pharaoh will be the proper subject of much of the rest of this chapter. Here one may briefly note two conceptually related themes, which Alexandre Moret[1] believes to have been derivatives of the theogamy. One of these was the representation of the king, being nursed at the breast of a goddess.[2] The other was a formula in which the ruler claimed to have received his royal power, and even to have exercised it, "in the egg."[1]

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[1] *Du caractère religieux de la royauté Pharaonique* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1902).

[2] "Il serait possible de retrouver dans tous les temples, pour tous les pharaons qui ont laissé des monuments, le tableau de l'allaitement" (*ibid.*, pp. 63-64). "Concluons que l'allaitement rappelle en abrégé et suppose les rites de la théogamie" (*ibid.*, p. 65). Seti I (*ca.* 1303-1290) is thus shown in *ANEP*, p. 147, pl. 422. Mention ought also to be made of Margaret Riemschneider, *Augengott und Heilige Hochzeit* ("Fragen zur vorgeschichtlichen Religion," Part I; Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1953). The impressive erudition of this work is matched only by what seems like scholarly caprice. On the present point, for example, she writes: "In Babylonien gehört zur Heiligen Hochzeit das Saugen an den Saugrohren. Diese Methode des Trinkens ist dem Ägypter fremd, er ersetzt sie durch das Saugen an der Mutterbrust. Wahrscheinlich verband sich bereits dem Babylonier mit dem Saugen aus dem Gefäss zugleich der mimische Ersatz für das Saugen an der Mutterbrust, denn der Patesi führt neben vielen anderen auch den Titel 'mit heiliger Milch gesäugt,' eines schliesst das andere ja niemals aus" (*ibid.*, pp. 235-36). Quite aside from the credulity demanded by this identification, see above, p. 70 and nn. 2 and 3, for remarks and references to Frankfort on the relation between drinking scenes and the Sacred Marriage. In support of this judgment on the book in general, a number of reviewers may be cited. J. Bottéro writes that "pour ma part et au risque de passer pour un inéducable beotien, cette intrepidité m'a paru souvent de l'inconscience et cette érudition une gêne plutôt qu'un secours à la clarté et à la solidité du raisonnement" (*RHR*, CXLVIII, 1 [1955], p. 112). J. Leipoldt observes that the entire work is founded on a debatable presupposition: "Von grundsätzlicher Bedeutung ist, dass die Vf. von der Anschauung ausgeht: die frühen Religionen seien einander so ähnlich, dass man von der einen auf die andere schliessen dürfe; dass man Überlieferungslücken auf der einen Seite mit Stoffen der anderen Seite ausfüllen könne. Natürlich ist die Voraussetzung weithin richtig. Aber sind die Frömmigkeitsformen Ägyptens und Mesopotamiens in ihrer Frühzeit wirklich so primitiv, dass

While such imagery seems clearly intended to associate the king with the race of the gods, not every reference to divine paternity speaks with the same intensity or clarity.[2] Nonetheless, there are at least three groups of data which do seem to point to a realistic understanding of the theogamy.

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man mit dieser Arbeitsweise weiterkommt? Hier bleiben zum mindesten beträchtliche Unsicherheiten" (*Theologische Literaturzeitung*, Vol. XVIII, No. 11 [1955], col. 654). Maurice Lambert comments that "on jugera sans doute cet ouvrage trop détaché des règles scientifiques; beaucoup d'hypothèses sont présentées comme des faits pour en étayer d'autres aussi fragiles" (*RA*, Vol. XLIX, No. 2 [1955], p. 105). A. Pohl agrees that "diese Methode ausserhalb unserer Wissenschaft steht" (*Or*, N.S. Vol. XXIV [1955], p. 174).

[1] "Une autre formule d'un usage aussi général rappelle encore que tout Pharaon est matériellement procréé par les dieux. Dans des inscriptions de toutes les époques on dit que Pharaon gouverne et règne 'dès l'oeuf,' c'est-à-dire dès avant sa naissance. . . . L'allusion serait incomprehensible sans la tradition de la théogamie" (Moret, *ibid.*, p. 65). This figure is explicitly associated with divine generation of the king in connection with Ramses II (*ARE*, III, #267, 270), and Piankhi (*ibid.*, IV, #817, 850).

[2] "Ramses II claimed to be the son of Montu,[256a] and Seth,[257a] as well as Re.[257a] In such instances the purely conventional--i.e. rhetorical--nature of the relationship is clear" (Morton Smith, *JBL*, LXXI, 3, p. 142, n. 29 [the numbers in the text refer to *ANET*]). In Papyrus Harris we read of Sethnakht: "But when the gods inclined themselves to peace, to set the land ([in]) its right according to its accustomed manner, they established their son, who came forth from their limbs, to be Ruler" (*ARE*, IV, #399). Of such statements, Hans Bonnet observes: "Im ganzen wird man freilich wohl doch die Bezeichnung der verschiedenen Götter als Väter des K. auf eine mehr geistige Übermittelung von Kräften und Eigenschaften beziehen dürfen" (*Reallexikon der Ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1952], p. 384a). See below, p. 138, n. 1.

The Mystery of the Divine Birth

Papyrus Westcar

There is, first of all, the middle section of a folk-tale, purporting to recount the mysterious origin of three kings of the Fifth Dynasty (ca. 2440-2315).[1] The only extant copy of the story is the above-named papyrus, dating from a period perhaps nine centuries after the events which it claims to describe.[2] It is generally assumed, however, that the account existed in earlier written and traditional forms.[3]

In the story, a magician has told King Cheops, builder of the Great Pyramid, that three children are about to be born who will drive him from the throne:

> It is the wife of a priest of Re of Sakhebu, that hath conceived three children of Re, lord of Sakhebu.
>
> . . . .
>
> Now on one of these days it came to pass that Red-dedet suffered the pangs of childbirth. Then said the majesty of Re of Sakhebu to Isis, Nephthys, Mesekhent, Heket, and Khnum; "Up, go ye and deliver Red-dedet of the three children that are in her

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[1] "It is of a popular character, as is shown both by the simplicity of its style and of its matter, which, at times, is burlesque, and by the fact that it is written in the vernacular; it might well be ascribed to a public story-teller. . . . It is the pious kings of the Fifth Dynasty whose origin is here recounted" (Adolph Erman, The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians: Poems, Narratives, and Manuals of Instruction, from the Third and Second Millennia B.C., trans. Aylward M. Blackman [London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1927], p. 36).

[2] "The papyrus was perhaps written in the Hyksos period" (ibid.). Breasted (ARE, II, #188) and Campbell (The Miraculous Birth . . . , p. 12) ascribe it to the Eighteenth Dynasty.

[3] Campbell, ibid. "La première redaction doit remonter a l'Ancien Empire [2615-2175]" (Drioton et Vandier, L'Égypte, p. 264).

> womb, that will exercise this excellent office in this entire land."
>
> . . . .
>
> And Isis placed herself in front of her, and Nephthys behind her, and Heket hastened the birth. And Isis said: "Be not lusty in her womb as truly as thou art named User-ref." This child slipped forth on to her hands, a child of one cubit with strong bones; the royal titulary of his limbs was of gold, and his head-cloth of true lapis lazuli. They washed him, cut his navel-string, and laid him on a sheet upon (?) a brick. And Meskhenet drew near unto him and she said: "A king that will exercise the kingship in the entire land." And Khnum gave health to his body.[1]

It may be noted that the children came forth from the womb already equipped with the royal head-gear and nomenclature.[2] What is more, they seem to be conceived of as statuettes, which fact may be variously viewed.[3]

Deir el Bahari and Luxor

With the rise of the Eleventh Dynasty (2133-1992) at Thebes, the Theban god Amon, assimilated to Amon-Re, moved up to the head of the

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[1] Erman, Literature . . . , pp. 43-45.

[2] Ibid., p. 45, n. 2.

[3] Erman (ibid.) appears to ascribe it simply to the story-teller's art, and adduces a parallel from an earlier tale (ibid., p. 31, n. 5). François Daumas, however, makes a more far-reaching proposal: "Or Maspero, très finement, fut le premier à remarquer que ce n'était pas 'un enfant naturel que notre auteur décrit, mais une statuette de divinité.' On peut ajouter que la hauteur d'une coudée est souvent celle qui est donnée aux statuettes en matière précieuse conservées dans les cryptes de Dendara. Les perruques de lapis-lazuli sont celles des sarcophages momiformes dans lesquels le défunt est assimilé aux dieux; l'or est la chair des dieux mêmes. Nous avons donc la description exacte, arrangée seulement de manière à faire entrer le rite dans le conte, de l'épisode de la nativité dans le mystère héliopolitain. La prêtresse qui jouait le rôle de la déesse--peut-être la reine-mère--y mettait au monde la statuette d'or et de lapis-lazuli qui allait tout à l'heure apparaître dans la procession" (Les mammisis des temples Égyptiens ["Annales de l'Université de Lyon: Lettres," No. 32; Paris: Société d'Edition "Les Belles Lettres," 1958], pp. 496-97). For further consideration of this interpretation, see below, p. 132, n. 1.

> womb, that will exercise this excellent office in this entire land."
>
> . . . .
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> And Isis placed herself in front of her, and Nephthys behind her, and Heket hastened the birth. And Isis said: "Be not lusty in her womb as truly as thou art named User-ref." This child slipped forth on to her hands, a child of one cubit with strong bones; the royal titulary of his limbs was of gold, and his head-cloth of true lapis lazuli. They washed him, cut his navel-string, and laid him on a sheet upon (?) a brick. And Mesekhent drew near unto him and she said: "A king that will exercise the kingship in the entire land." And Khnum gave health to his body.[1]

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Deir el Bahari and Luxor

With the rise of the Eleventh Dynasty (2133-1992) at Thebes, the Theban god Amon, assimilated to Amon-Re, moved up to the head of the pantheon.[1] It is he, therefore, who figures in the theogamic reliefs in the temples of Hatshepsut (1484-1469) and Amonhotep III (ca. 1402-1364).[2]

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[1] Erman, Literature . . . , pp. 43-45.

[2] Ibid., p. 45, n. 2.

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The scenes in question are virtually identical.[3] Due to the mutilation of the Deir el Bahari reliefs "by the triumphant Thutmose III, who erased the figure and inscriptions of the queen, and by the Amon-hating Amonhotep IV, who did likewise for those of Amon," Breasted's rendering also made use of the duplicate material from Luxor.[4]

The account begins at a council of the gods, and includes a series of episodes in which the child is conceived, formed, born, presented to Amon, nursed, and receives the promises of her future greatness.[5] The hierogamic portions are inscribed within a scene in which Amon and Queen Ahmose are seated, facing each other:[6]

> Utterance of Amon-Re, lord of Thebes, presider over Karnak. He made his form like the majesty of this husband, the King Okheperkere (Thutmose I). He found her as she slept in the beauty of her palace. She waked at the fragrance of the god, which she smelled in the presence of his majesty. He went to her

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[1] Drioton et Vandier, L'Égypte, p. 66.

[2] Steindorff and Seele, When Egypt . . . , p. 273, Fig. 109 shows the spatial relationships among the various archaeological sites in the vicinity of Thebes.

[3] Breasted, ARE, II, #190, n. a.

[4] Ibid., #190.

[5] Ibid., #192-212.

[6] The standard publication of the scene concerning Hatshepsut is Edouard Naville, The Temple of Deir el Bahari (London: The Egypt Exploration Fund [1896]), Vol. II, pl. 47. A photograph of the equivalent relief at Luxor serves as the frontispiece of Campbell, The Miraculous Birth . . . .

> immediately, coivit cum ea, he imposed his desire upon her, he caused that she should see him in his form of a god. When he came before her, she rejoiced at the sight of his beauty, his love passed into her limbs, which the fragrance of the god flooded; all his odors were from Punt. [text behind Amon]
>
> Utterance by the king's-wife and king's-mother Ahmose, in the presence of the majesty of this august god, Amon, Lord of Thebes: "How great is thy fame! It is splendid to see thy front; thou hast united my majesty (fem.) with thy favors, thy dew is in all my limbs!" After this, the majesty of this god did all that he desired with her. [text behind the queen]
>
> Utterance of Amon, Lord of the Two Lands, before her: "Khnemet-Amon-Hatshepsut shall be the name of this my daughter, whom I have placed in thy body, this saying which comes out of thy mouth. She shall exercise the excellent kingship in this whole land." [text next to the right][1]

This text and its relationships with other references to hierogamy will be taken up again.[2] In passing, one may note the queen's reference to the "dew" of the god, around which J. de Savignac has gathered other evidences of belief in its divine origin and fertilizing power.[3]

The post-imperial birthhouses

The name "mammisi" results from the transcription of an Egyptian ideogram into Coptic by Jean François Champollion. It refers to small chapels found in temple complexes dedicated to local divine triads.[1] G. Maspero supposed them to be vestiges from an earlier period when the ceremonial of the divine/royal birth had included a place and time of actual confinement for the mother.[2]

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[1] ARE, II, #196-98.

[2] See below, pp. 131-38, 147.

[3] "Les géographes nous apprennent que si la pluie est à peu près inexistante dans la Haute-Égypte, la rosée y est, par contre, fort abondante durant les mois d'hiver. . . . On croyait chez les Égyptiens, comme généralement dans l'antiquité, que la rosée descendait du ciel. . . . La rosée fécondante, étant céleste, est, comme il va de soi, attribuée aux dieux. Aussi est-ce par elle qu'ils fécondent les mortelles dont ils daignent s'approcher" ("La rosée solaire de l'ancienne Égypte," La Nouvelle Clio, Vol. VI, Nos. 5-6 [1954], pp. 345-46).

To Daumas, the *mammisis* appear rather to have begun as "wayside shrines," at which festival processions made a stop. From this form there evolved a small temple with a resident deity.[3] There are but uncertain evidences of "birthhouses" during the period of Empire, under Ramses II (1290-1224).[1] In the late period, however, mammisis which are characterized by their architectural form and the context of their walls are preserved. They are dated under Nectanebo (380-363) at Denderah, Ptolemy V Epiphanes (203-181) at Philae, Ptolemy IX Euergetes II Physkon at Kom Ombo and Edfu, Ptolemy XVI Caesarion (45-44) at Ermant, and Nero (54-68), Trajan (98-117), Hadrian (117-138), and Antonius Pius (138-161) at Denderah.[2]

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[1] "Ce nom fut donné par les anciens Égyptiens aux petits temples appelés *Typhonia* par les Grecs, édifices consacrés au *dieu-fils* la troisième personne des triades locales, et bâtis à côté du grand temple de chaque nome, dédié aux deux premières personnes, le *dieu-père* et la *déesse-mère*" (Champollion, *Grammaire égyptienne* [Paris: 1836], p. 101; quoted in *MTE*, p. 15). "Auch Typhonien wurden diese Nebenheiligtumer zeitweilig genannt, da man in der als Schützerin der Wöchnerin und des Kindes in ihnen vielfach dargestellten Nilpferdgöttin einen weiblichen Typhon sah" *RAR*, p. 209b).

[2] "Il semble qu'au moins aux temps très reculés où le cérémonial des naissances royales ou divines fut réglé, l'usage était de séparer la femme sur le point de devenir mère, et de l'enfermer dans une case isolée ou elle se cachait jusqu'à ses relevailles: chacune des grandes villes de l'Égypte avait en souvenir de cette coutume, tombée en désuétude parmi le peuple, un petit temple construit à côté du temple principal et où la déesse-mère du nome était censée faire ses couches, le *mammisi*, le *lieu de la naissance*, tel qu'on le voit encore à Philae, à Edfou, à Denderah" (Review of *The Temple of Deir el Bahari, Parts I, II, and III*, by Edouard Naville, *Journal des Savants* [Juillet, 1899], p. 404). See below for further discussion of this point, p. 140.

[3] "D'abord, les anciens mammisis que nous connaissons se présentent à nous sous une forme extrêmement simple: une chambre, précédée d'un pronaos et munie d'une voie d'acces propylées ou porte percée dans l'épaisseur d'un pylône. C'est ainsi qu'ils nous apparaissent à Philaé, dans l'état primitif, ou dans le monument de Nectanébo à Dendara. Ils suggèrent immédiatement l'idée d'un reposoir, le mot étant entendu au sens large. On y vient en procession" (*MTE*, p. 159). "Il semble donc que la liturgie s'amplifie et que, de simple reposoir, le monument est devenue un temple où demeure une statue divine à laquelle il faut rendre un culte divin journalier, quelque reduit qu'il soit" (*ibid.*, p. 160).

The Papyrus Westcar account and the scenes from the Eighteenth Dynasty monuments tell of the conception and birth of royal figures. In the case of the mammisi reliefs, it is rather the birth of the third member of the divine triad which is represented.[1] Even so, the divine birth apparently is taken to symbolize that of the current ruler.[2]

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[1] F. W. von Bissing translates, from a foundation inscription, the line: "Eine prächtige Kapelle des Herrn der Götter, ein für immer schönes Geburtshaus" ("Über die Kapelle im Hof Ramesses II im Tempel von Luxor," Acta Orientalia, Vol. VIII [1930], p. 147). Breasted reports concerning Abu Simbel: "The small temple immediately south of the sun-temple has, since Miss Edwards' time, been called the temple library. For this there is no evidence; on the contrary, the inscriptions in the place distinctly call it a 'birthhouse.' It is, therefore, the oldest example of the chapel of the divine mother-consort and her son, of which we have a number of examples in Ptolemaic times" ("First Preliminary Report of the Egyptian Expedition [The Temples of Lower Nubia]," AJSL, Vol. XXIII, No. 1 [1906], pp. 34-35). Bonnet comments on these evidences: "Ihre Vorgeschichte liegt noch im Dunkel; denn in älterer Zeit sind G. nicht mit Sicherheit nachzuweisen. Wohl wäre die Kapelle im Hof Ramses II. im Tempel von Luksor . . . G. genannt; aber dieser greift in der Wiedergabe des Äg. Ausdruckes fehl. Man wird danach auch der Angabe Breasteds . . . dass die Felsenkapelle im Süden des grossen Tempels von Abu Simbel nach ihren Inschriften ein G. sei, nicht ohne Zweifel gegegnen, zumal ihre Ausstattung jede Hindeutung auf einen Geburtsvorgang vermissen lässt" (RAR, p. 209b). Daumas also argues, on linguistic grounds, that neither the chapel at Luxor nor the one at Abu Simbel may be identified as mammisis (MTE, p. 42 and n. 1).

[2] MTE, p. 80.

There is also a spatial problem involved in comparing the Theban scenes with those of the post-imperial period. Whereas, at Deir el Bahari and Luxor, the reliefs are grouped on a single plane, at Denderah the comparable episodes are distributed on three walls, with no sure indication as to their relationship or sequence. Nonetheless, the same themes seem clearly to be involved.[3]

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[1] "Les temples où la naissance divine est représentée n'ont plus, à certains égards, le même décoration qu'a l'époque classique. On y voit moins d'allusions aux événements contemporains des rois constructeurs, moins de représentations étrangères au rituel: tout disparaît devant les tableaux dogmatiques; la personnalité du roi s'y efface devant celle des dieux. Le souverain, à l'époque grecque et romaine, vit loin des temples ou même hors d'Égypte; on ne le designe guère dans les cartouches que par le titre impersonnel du Pharaon; le plus souvent même les cartouches restent vides, anonymes. Par contre le roi se confond de plus en plus avec son correspondant divin Horus, et la nativité royale cede la place à la naissance d'Horus" (Moret, *Du caractère . . .*, pp. 68-69).

[2] "La question qui se pose est de savoir si la naissance d'Horus symbolise ou non, la naissance du Pharaon. On peut répondre affirmativement, car la décoration caractéristique des chambres consacrées au roi dans les temples de l'époque classique, et les scènes les plus importantes sont restées les mêmes dans les Mamisi" (*ibid.*, p. 69). Daumas points to other evidences, such as "l'indication que Trajan, constructeur du mammisi, est 'Ihy lui-même.' Nous tenons l'expression même de la théologie royale au mammisi et nous comprenons maintenant facilement les nombreuses allusions à l'assimilation du roi et du petit dieu" (*MTE*, p. 367).

[3] "Les scènes se groupent autour de trois thèmes centraux: la hiérogamie, c'est-à-dire la préparation à la naissance divine; la naissance divine elle-même et l'allaitement; l'intronisation royale du dieu" (*MTE*, p. 494). See above, p. 112.

The treatment here will be limited to a comparison with the scene cited earlier.[1] Amon is shown seated, as before, but facing the goddess Hathor rather than the queen. At Denderah, the god Khnum is also involved.[2] The dialogue runs as follows:

> Réciter les paroles par Amon-Re à Hathor, Dame de Dendara, oeil de Rê: Ton nez est en vie et stabilité. Je m'unis à toi en dilatation de coeur (. . .) en ton corps. (Ta) rosée me rejouit (?). Ton parfum est celui du Pays-du-dieu, l'odeur de ton corps est celle d'Oponé. [i.e. Punt] Me voici qui établis solidement ton fils, pour qu'il lie l'héritage du Double-pays, pour qu'il embellisse les temples des dieux et qu'il façonne leurs statues.
>
> . . . .
>
> Réciter les paroles par Hathor, Dame de Dendara, oeil de Rê, Dame du ciel, maîtresse des dieux: Combien est belle la sortie (. . .) tu es le Seigneur des dieux. Tout ce que tu dis vient à l'existence à l'instant même.
>
> Réciter les paroles par Khnoum, Seigneur du tour: je modèle ton fils, sorti de toi, selon l'ordre de ta perfection. C'est la semence d'un dieu auguste. Sa qualité royale sera à la ressemblance de ta personne selon la perfection de Ta Majesté. Il remplira le role de roi sur ton trône pour lier l'héritage du Double-pays.[3]

Although both the action and the sentiments are generally similar to the earlier relief, it may be noted that the imagery of sexual union is decidedly muted,[4] and that the "fragrance" and "dew" are here attributed to Hathor rather than to Amon.[1]

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[1] See above, pp. 110-11.

[2] "C'est seulement à Dendara que Khnoum assiste à la théogamie et y prend part. À Philae et à Edfou Amon et Hathor sont seuls" (*MTE*, p. 395). Daumas cites publications of the temples at Dendara and Philae (*ibid.*, nn. 1, 2), but they have been inaccessible to the present writer. The scene at Edfu has been consulted in Émile Chassinat, *Le Mammisi d'Edfou* ("Memoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale du Caire," Vol. XVI; Caire: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1910), Fasc. 1, pl. XV.

[3] Daumas, *ibid.*, pp. 397-98.

[4] See below, p. 140.

Festivals and Processions

The "Myth and Ritual Pattern" supposes that divine activity is represented in the ritual of an annual festival.[2] What should be sought, in that case, is evidence that scenes such as those described above have indeed been realized at the human and temporal level. This calls for an analysis of three festivals in which the presence of such evidence has been claimed.

The beautiful feast of Opet

The first of these occurred annually at Luxor. Although not every student has interpreted it as hierogamic,[3] it will be instructive first to distill the evidence put forward by those who have done so. What emerges is a single discussion of the hypothesis, to whose argumentation the following treatment has therefore addressed itself.[4]

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[1] Cf. MTE, p. 397, nn. 1, 2.

[2] See above, p. 23.

[3] "It seems to have been purely an excursion of Amun, Mut and Khons from their temples at Karnak to Luxor (Egn. Opet) and back" (Jaroslav Černý, Ancient Egyptian Religion [London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1952], p. 120).

[4] A. M. Blackman says that "it was almost certainly a marriage festival" (MAR, p. 34). E. O. James asserts that "there the union of the god and the queen was supposed to take place when at the Theban festival of Opet he visited the sanctuary in all his magnificence for this purpose" (The Cult of the Mother-Goddess [New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959], p. 65). Eva L. R. Meyerowitz assures us that "from the Middle Kingdom onwards the queen incarnated the goddess Mut of Thebes, who was identified in the royal cult with Hathor of Heliopolis, the mother-wife of the solar Horus. Even so, the sacred marriage between Horus-Pharaoh and

The celebration of the festival is not recorded before the Eighteenth Dynasty.[1] As a feast of Amon it was, of course, abandoned by Amenhotep IV; but it was promptly restored by his successors.[2] The relevant reliefs are those of Tutankhamun (*ca*. 1346-1337), on the "Wände des Säulenganges zwischen den Hofen" at Luxor.[3]

Hathor, personified by the queen or her proxy, continued to be celebrated in the Beautiful Festival of Opet" (*The Divine Kingship in Ghana and Ancient Egypt* [London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1960], p. 55). Blackman (*ibid.*, n. 2) and James (*ibid.*, p. 262, n. 40) both refer to Walther Wolf, *Das Schöne Fest von Opet: Die Festzugsdarstellung im Grossen Säulengange des Tempels von Luksor* ("Veröffentlichungen der Ernst von Sieglin-Expedition in Ägypten," ed. Georg Steindorff, Vol. V; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs' Sche Buchhandlung, 1931). Meyerowitz (*ibid.*, n. 2) refers to Jacobsohn, *Die dogmatische Stellung . . .*, who, in his discussion of Opet, also relies upon Wolf (p. 19, nn. 6, 9).

[1] "Einmal scheint das offenbar bedeutende Alter der Texte auch für ein hohes Alter unseres Festes zu sprechen, von dem wir ja vor der 18. Dynastie keine sicher Kunde besitzen" (Wolf, *ibid.*, p. 57). Cf. references to Thutmose III (*ARE*, II, #554, 591), Amenhotep II (*ibid.*, #809), and Amenhotep III (*ibid.*, #887-88).

[2] "Artists of the restoration faced a twofold task; Akhenaten had not only spurned the gods of old, but, by stressing the more trivial aspects of his humanity, he had insulted the very concept of kingship. Both evils had to be undone. Tutankhamun, who returned to the fold of the priesthood of Amon, appears mainly preoccupied with the first problem: the religious scenes from his reign commemorate in the traditional way the so-called festival of opet when the god Amon visited his harem at Luxor" (Groenewegen-Frankfort, *Arrest and Movement*, p. 119). The resumption of the feast was claimed by Haremhab (*ARE*, III, #58), and continued at least down into the eighth century B.C. Cf. *ARE*, IV, #671 (Panozem), #836 (Piankhi), and #909 (Taharka).

[3] RAR, p. 797a. The inscriptions are listed as "Processional Colonnade, Amenophis III, sculptured by Tut^{c}ankhamūn, usurped by Haremhab," in Bertha Porter and Rosalind B. Moss, *Topographical Bibliography of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic texts, reliefs, and paintings*, Vol. II: *Theban Temples* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 102).

The supposition that these refer to a marriage festival is suggested first of all by the fact that "Opet," the name given to the Luxor temple, implies the notion of "harem."[1] Beyond that, however, it is admitted that the present texts offer no direct evidence of a hierogamy, since they depict only the journey of the gods to and from Luxor.[2]

Some hints of nuptial intent have nonetheless been sought in the dialogue of those who made the trip. The goddess Neith says, for example:

> "Eine Trinkstätte ist erbaut für die Partei, die im Schiff der Schiffe ist. Die Wege . . . sind gehackt für dich o Nil, grosser und hoher. Mögest du gnädig stimmen deine beiden Herrinnen dem Horus mit dem starken Arm, wenn der Gott gerudert wird mit der Schönen des Gottes. Hathor hat bereits das Schöne der schönen Dinge getan dem Konig Haremhab, der von Amun geliebt und von den Göttern gelobt ist."[3]

---

[1] "Im Falle des Opetfestes legt schon das Wort ip.t 'Harem' den Gedanken nahe, dass es sich um den Besuch Amuns in seinem Harem handelt, dass also Amun nach Opet zieht, um dort ein Beilager zu halten" (Wolf, Das Schöne Fest . . ., p. 73). Bonnet says of the name: "Es ist das die Göttin von Luksor. Sie ist ursprünglich nicht mehr als die Verkörperung des Tempels, des Ip.t d.h. des Hochzeitshauses des Amun" (RAR, p. 533b). Concerning the temple he adds: "Unter dem Namen 'südlicher Harem' (Äg. Opet) war er dem dem Min angeglichenen ithyphallischen Amun, dem Amenemopet, dem 'Amun im Harem' geweiht" (ibid., p. 796b).

[2] "Unsere Bilder und Texte bieten in dieser Richtung nur wenig neue Anhaltspunkte, was aber nicht verwunderlich ist, da sie ja nicht das Fest selbst zum Gegenstand haben, sondern nur die Reise zum und vom Fest, entsprechend dem Orte, wo sie sich befinden, nämlich in dem Säulengang, der auf den Tempel zuführt" (Wolf, ibid.). Jacobsohn proposes rather that it is the mysterious nature of the feast which has prevented a forthright description of its central event: "Wir werden nicht fehlgehen, wenn wir in dem Mythos ein geheimes Mysterium sehen, das als etwas Schauer-Volles und Über-Mächtiges offen auszusprechen oder näher auszuführen verpönt und verboten war" (Die dogmatische Stellung . . ., p. 19).

[3] Wolf, ibid., p. 57.

Wolf comments that what Hathor is described as having done to the king "kann doch nur das Liebesglück sein, das die Liebesgöttin dem Konig verschafft hat."[1]

A second hint appears in two forms of a statement concerning Amon:

> Das Jubellied der die Amunbarke ziehenden Mannschaft:
>
> . . . .
>
> "Er verleihe (?) . . . in Leben und Wohlergehen seinem Sohne Haremhab, einem Sohne, der nützlich ist seinem Erzeuger, wie er ja rudert seinen Vater Amun, damit er (Amun) tut, was sein Ka zufrieden ist."[2]
>
> Die Abteilungen der Rudermannschaft und die Ersten des Heeres, die diesem ehrwürdigen Gotte folgen. Jubellied, das sie sagen: "Wie frisch ist der gute Herrscher, wenn er vor Amun ist, um ihn nach Karnak zu rudern an seinem alljährlichen Feste, wenn er (Amun) tut, was er zufrieden ist, im ehrwürdigen Opet."[3]

Wolf considers this expression a still stronger evidence: "Das wird eine euphemistische Umschreibung für 'wenn er sich geschlechtlich vergnügt' sein."[4]

Such interpretations may be valid; they strike the present writer as at least probable, rather than improbable. They hardly suffice to demonstrate, however, that the Festival of Opet was enacted ritually as a Sacred Marriage. Until further evidence is brought forward, such a position would seem to remain little more than a supposition.

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[1] "Sodann haben wir in dem zweiten Liede allem Anschein nach einen der ganz wenigen Hinweise auf den hochzeitlichen Charakter des Festes" (ibid.).

[2] Ibid., p. 56.

[3] Ibid., p. 64.

[4] Ibid., p. 73.

The Sacred Marriage at Edfu

A similar situation prevails with regard to the festival of Horus at Edfu. That is, the "Patternist" interpretation is founded primarily on a single study: that of Hermann Junker.[1] He in fact saw the hierogamy as a distinctly secondary theme of the voyage, and gave it very brief mention:

> Hathor galt dann auch als Braut des Horus; in die Besuchszeit fällt ihre Vermählung, es ist das Fest der Umarmung. Hathor empfängt den jungen Horus und es werden ihr die "Frauenzeremonien" verrichtet.[2]

Two more recent and more extensive studies may also be consulted.[3] They confine themselves to reliefs and inscriptions from the Ptolemaic structure at Edfu, which affords an unparalleled opportunity for thorough study of the rites of an Egyptian temple.[4]

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[1] "That at this festival the marriage of Hathor with Horus was celebrated as well as the god's victories over his enemies is made quite clear by Professor Junker" (Blackman, MAR, p. 34). "Since it was 'to consummate the beauteous embrace with her Horus' that Hathor sailed from Denderah to Edfu, a ritual marriage must have occurred during the course of the festival" (James, The Cult . . ., p. 64; the reference to Junker's monograph is on p. 267, n. 39). The work in question is Die Onurislegende ("Denkschriften: Philosophisch-historische Klasse," Vol. LIX, Nos. 1-2; Wien: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1917). His comments are based on inscriptions at Dendara (ibid., p. 116).

[2] Ibid., p. 118.

[3] Alliot, RHR, CXXXVII, 1, pp. 59-104; and Fairman, BJRL, XXXVII, 1, pp. 196-200.

[4] Cf. Alliot, ibid., pp. 61-62; and Fairman, ibid., pp. 165-66. There is an artist's drawing of the temple in RAR, p. 784, pl. 187.

The festival began when Hathor embarked from Denderah and sailed upstream to Edfu. The journey, including three stops to "visit" gods along the way, consumed a fortnight.[1] The Sacred Marriage, so-called, seems to have consisted simply of the meeting of Hathor and Horus in the temple, where they spent the night together. The next day, the festival turned to other activities and themes.[2]

In short, then, the hierogamy at Edfu offers a minimum in the way of ritual action and provides very little basis for interpreting the meaning of that which did take place.[3] Above all, there is not even a suggestion that the "marriage" of the god and goddess was ritually enacted by the king and queen, or by any other human representatives.

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[1] Fairman, *ibid.*, p. 196. Alliot (*ibid.*, pp. 82-83), who provides a more detailed and vivid description of the journey, refers further (*ibid.*, p. 88) to Herodotus (ii, 60 ff.) for evocation of the mood of ancient Egyptian pilgrimages.

[2] "Eventually the boats arrived at Edfu, and Horus and his bride entered the enclosure . . . This concluded the ceremonies of the day, this was the marriage proper, and Horus and Hathor spent their marriage night in the Sanctuary. The next morning, the second day of the lunar month, there was a subtle change: the emphasis is no longer on the marriage, which is not mentioned, but instead we read of a fourteen-day Festival of Behdet which commenced on this day" (Fairman, *ibid.*, p. 197). "Le cortège fluvial remontait un autre canal, et venait attendre la déesse visiteuse au temple d'Etbo, le plus ancien site habité dans Edfou, un peu au nord de la ville moderne. Les pèlerins d'Assouan et d'Éléphantine se joignaient à cette flottille. Le cortège d'Horus et celui d'Hathor se rencontraient là: c'était la *Reunion*. Cette reunion donnait son nom aux quinze jours de la fête" (Alliot, *ibid.*, p. 83). Later, Fairman wrote elsewhere "that in part it was a Sacred Marriage is certain, but that was neither the sole nor the principal part of the festival" (*MRAK*, p. 87).

[3] Alliot follows his description of Hathor's departure down the Nile with the observation that "Horus et Hathor, roi et reine de l'Égypte, ont pour un an rajeuni leur puissance sur la terre des hommes" (*ibid.*, p. 88).

The proposal that the royal couple at some time did play such roles in Egyptian ritual is most commonly made in connection with a third festival, which must now be considered.

The going-forth of Min

Min, a god depicted regularly in ithyphallic form, was among the most ancient of Egyptian deities.[1] From the Middle Kingdom forward, he is frequently assimilated to Min-Amon.[2]

As his form unambiguously suggests, Min was a god of fertility and procreation.[3] There are even texts describing him as a "rainmaker,"[4] though for obvious reasons this function could hardly have been a significant one in Egypt. His sacred plant was lettuce, then as now supposed by the Egyptians to possess fecundating properties.[1]

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[1] "Le dieu ithyphallique Min, principe de la génération et de la fécondité animale et végétale, est une des plus anciennes divinités du panthéon égyptien; son existence remonte aux origines les plus lointaines de la religion et de l'histoire" (Henri Gauthier, *Le personnel du dieu Min* ["Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie, et d'histoire," Vol. III: Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1931], p. 1).

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

[3] "War doch Min sowohl für das Menschengeschlecht als für das Pflanzenreich der Schenker der Fruchtbarkeit" (C. Jouco Bleeker, *Die Geburt eines Gottes: eine Studie über den Ägyptischen Gott Min und sein Fest*, German trans. Magrita J. Freie ["Supplements to *Numen*," Vol. III; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1956], p. 97). The procreative aspect seems especially to have been emphasized. He was referred to as "der Stier, der auf den Frauen ist und Samen schafft den Göttern und Göttinnen," and as "der Gatte, der die Frauen mit seinem Gliede befruchtet" (*RAR*, p. 462a).

[4] *ARE*, I, #451. "Aber das sind doch deutlich sekundäre Aussagen, die zudem ebenso selten sind wie der Regen selbst in Äg." (*RAR*, p. 463a). "Die 'Wolken' deuten wohl auch eher auf das Wüstenland als auf Oberägypten selbst, das bekanntlich die Fruchtbarkeit seines Bodens allein der regelmässigen Überschwemmung des Nil verdankt" (Jacobsohn, *Die dogmatische Stellung . . .*, p. 17).

The most complete representation of the festival of Min is found in the temple of Medinet Habu, erected by Ramses III (*ca*. 1175-1144).[2] The scenes show an elaborate processional grouped about the Pharaoh and the divine image. The Pharaoh at various points offers sacrifices, incense, and libations to the god, ceremonially releases four birds, and cuts a sheaf of corn or wheat.[3] Where among these activities may evidences of the Sacred Marriage be found?

It is at least suggested, according to several interpreters, by an epithet commonly applied to Min. He was called "Kamutef": literally, "Bull of his mother."[4] In the Medinet Habu inscriptions, a priest at one point exclaims: "Hail to thee, Min, who impregnates his mother! How mysterious is that which thou hast done to her in the darkness."

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[1] Gauthier, *Les fêtes du dieu Min* ("Recherches d'archéologie, de philologie, et d'histoire," Vol. II: Cairo: Imprimerie de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1931), p. 142. Cf. *RAR*, p. 462a, Fig. 117.

[2] The standard publication is *Medinet Habu*, Vol. IV: *Festival Scenes of Ramses II* ("Oriental Institute Publications," ed. John Albert Wilson and George Thomas Allen, Vol. LI; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940), pls. 196-217. Plate 196, a summary sketch of all the scenes, is conveniently reproduced by Bleeker, *Die Geburt . . .*, as Fig. 17 of the endpapers.

[3] Bleeker argues that in these inscriptions "wesentliche Momente nicht abgebildet worden sind" (*ibid.*, p. 74). He had speculated earlier that such reserve might have been prompted by "Furcht von Profanierung . . . Von einer Darstellung des Allerheiligsten hat man sich also aus Scheu vor dem göttlichen Mysterium enthalten" (*ibid.*, p. 66).

[4] *RAR*, p. 364a.

E. O. James therefore speculates that "the king and queen may then have engaged in ritual sexual intercourse . . . If this was so, it may have been the occasion for an heir to the throne to have been begotten."[1]

Aside from the fact that the queen does appear several times in the reliefs, however, there seems to be very little justification for implicating her in the analysis of this passage. What such an incestuous epithet seems more likely to have implied is self-generation--a concept which may have been suggested by the daily "death and rebirth" of the sun.[1] Whatever use was made of this notion in the Min-festival, the proposition that it somehow called for a royal sexual act remains, it would seem, at the level of speculation.

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[1] The Ancient Gods, p. 116. Meyerowitz notes that "behind the bull [in the procession] and again above, amidst the text, is the queen. This indicates perhaps the sacred marriage, performed between the Pharaoh, personifying Min-Khamutef, or Amen-Re-Khamutef and herself, the 'wife of the Khamutef,' either Isis, Hathor or Mut" (The Divine Kingship . . ., p. 184). Frankfort likewise adopts this position: "The mystery is that of conception and rebirth. But was it merely Min as the personification of fertility in general who was renewed in the union with his mother at the festival? Or was it, at the same time, the god in Pharaoh who prepared the renewal of his incarnation by begetting an heir?" (Kingship, p. 188). The difficulty with this sort of casual proposal is that it has the effect of occupying a position which has by no means been secured. Frankfort recognizes the problem raised by the annual celebration of the festival, for example, but dismisses it with the notation that "each prince was a potential heir" (ibid., p. 390, n. 29). Surely, however, the royal intercourse was not confined to this occasion: were all royal children born in the subsequent year attributed to the festival congress? Or suppose, as is certainly possible, that the queen bore no children at all in a given calendar year: what effect would this have on the theory here being examined? Jacobsohn's "Vermutung" along these lines is considerably more sophisticated. Min as "Kamutef" is a "mysterischen Vereinigung" of Osiris the Father and Horus the Son (Die dogmatische Stellung . . ., pp. 34-35). The Pharaoh, as the earthly incarnation of the Son, is in the course of the festival united with the Father-Son (Kamutef) "in kultische-mystischer Weise" (ibid., p. 46). In this sense it is furthermore the Pharaoh who is himself "reborn" as the outcome of the Sacred Marriage: "Wir vermuteten oben, dass der Ka des Königs identisch sei mit dem Gottwesen, das als Ka-Mutef ('Stier seiner Mutter') sich der Göttin oder Königin naht, um mit ihr von neuem sich selbst zu zeugen und schliesslich wiedergeboren zu werden als 'Sohn,' als neuer und gleichzeitig erneuerter König von Ägypten" (ibid., p. 62). Bonnet describes these proposals as "weitgehende, aber doch problematische Folgerungen" (RAR, p. 365a).

Another piece of such speculation concerning the Min festival is still to be dealt with. Just before or after the king performs the cutting of the sheaf, the texts record that a female figure with an untranslatable title recites a spell seven times as she walks around the king.[2] It seems fair to say that at present we know neither who this person was nor the meaning of her action.[3] The supposition begins, then, with the identification of the queen as the "Shemayt."[4] Here is Frankfort's justification for proposing that "it is possible, though there are only hints to this effect, that the king and queen had intercourse at this point":[1]

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[1] Drioton and Vandier say of Min that "il était qualifié de 'Taureau de sa mère,' qui était à l'origine, semble-t-il, un titre du soleil renaissant chaque matin de la déesse-ciel qu'il avait fécondée la veille" (L'Égypte, p. 69). Cf. Gauthier, Les fêtes . . . , p. 141; RAR, p. 364a-b; and Bleeker, Die Geburt . . . , p. 101. For discussion of similar imagery in the Pyramid Texts, see below, pp. 129-31.

[2] This description is composed from C. J. Bleeker, "The Position of the Queen in Ancient Egypt," The Sacral Kingship, p. 267; and Frankfort, Kingship, p. 390, n. 28.

[3] So Gauthier: "De toute façon, l'action accomplie par ce personnage féminin demeure aussi mysterieuse pour nous que son identité même" (Les fêtes . . . , p. 99).

[4] "The queen is the only female figure in the first part of the procession and may well, therefore, be the 'Shemayt'" (Frankfort, Kingship, p. 390, n. 28). Meyerowitz (The Divine Kingship, p. 88) and Bleeker (Sacral Kingship, p. 267) both employ the modal "must," whereas Gauthier poses the identification in the form of a question (Les fêtes, p. 98).

> The verb phr which is here translated "goes around" occurs also as "winding around" in the epithet of Mut concerned with the Kamutef mystery which, we suppose, may have taken place at this point in the Min festival. Mut, as we have seen, is called the "snake who wound around her father Re and bore him as Khonsu."[2]

This seems to be an inadequate foundation for the inferential structure which it is expected to support. It may be noted, in any case, that the circuitous performance of the female celebrant has provoked other interpreters to a markedly different kind of analysis.[3] Moreover, Frankfort himself later wrote that there was "no sacred marriage" in Egypt.[4]

Both the Opet and Edfu festivals did at least imply the "marriage" of male and female deities, though there is no evidence to show that the hierogamy was ritually represented at the human level. In the Min festival, there is not even such a mythical structure to begin with. It is therefore difficult to see how it provides, in any fashion, the sort of testimony to the hieros gamos which this study has been seeking.[1]

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[1] Kingship, p. 188.

[2] Ibid., p. 390, n. 28. Fairman presumably refers to the same "possibility" (MRAK, p. 85).

[3] Meyerowitz, who agrees that a hierogamy took place at the festival, insists nonetheless that this is not it (Divine Kingship . . . , p. 180, n. 3). Rather, "this must surely have been a magical rite designed to protect the god, here personified by the Pharaoh, and to ensure his rebirth" (ibid., p. 180). Gauthier, on the basis of later references to a "Shemayt" at Edfu, suggests that the action referred to in the Ramessid text may have been a dance (Les fetes . . . , p. 98). Bleeker proposes that "by walking around the king she both expresses and realizes his divine nature, since in Antiquity the circumambulation is a rite meant to dramatize the divine eternal life" (Sacral Kingship, p. 268). He says more specifically elsewhere that "der Umgang war eine Darstellung des Kreislaufes des göttlichen Lebens durch den Tod hin zu dem Leben und hatte kathartische Wirkung" (Die Geburt . . . , p. 85).

[4] See above, p. 103, n. 2.

The Testimony of the Pyramid Texts

One clear reference to sexual intercourse on the part of the king now calls for consideration. Here is James' summary of the matter:

> In Egypt instead of the king being invited to share the nuptial couch of the Mother-goddess as in Mesopotamia, he cohabited with the queen in his divine status as the incarnation of the Sun-god. As the "Bull of Heaven" he was the dominant male, the embodiment of virile fertility, and in this capacity he impregnated the queen, called "the cow who bore the bull," as Re impregnated the body of Nut "with the seed of that spirit that must be in her."[2]

In support of this statement, he offers two lines from the Pyramid Texts.[3] It appears unlikely, however, that these sepulchral inscriptions refer to any relationship between the king and queen. They are rather "ascension texts," which concern the king's post-mortem activity and estate.[4]

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[1] "Was den letzten Moment anbetrifft, mag noch bemerkt werden, dass die Königin freilich in dem Festzug mit einherschreitet, dass aber in den Texten keine einzige Anspielung auf einen Ritus zu finden ist, der den hieros gamos wiedergeben sollte" (Bleeker, Die Geburt . . . , p. 99). This passage is in fact part of a contention that none of the five elements of the alleged "pattern" (see above, p. 23) are to be discovered in the festival.

[2] The Cult . . . , p. 67.

[3] Nn. 47 and 48 (ibid.) refer, respectively, to PT 282c and 990a.

[4] "The purpose of these royal texts then was to guarantee the deceased king's resurrection and new-birth, his transfiguration and divinity, his successful journey to heaven, and his immortality there with the

The "seed" that is in Nut is the king himself.[1] He will be reborn in heaven through sexual union with her: "It is N. with whom his mother, the great wild-cow, will be united."[2] The meaning of all of this becomes clearer in the following passages:

> Thou shalt embark into the boat of Rē^c, in which the gods love to ascend,
> in which the gods love to descend, in which Rē^c is rowed to the horizon;
> N. shall embark into it, like Rē^c.
> Thou shalt seat thyself upon this throne of Rē^c, that thou mayest command the gods,
> for thou art indeed Rē^c, who comes forth from Nut, who gives birth to Rē^c every day.
> N. is born every day like Rē^c.[3]
>
> His mother, heaven, bears him, living, each day, beloved of Rē^c,
> with whom he dawns in the east, with whom he sets in the west.
> His mother Nut is not void of him, daily.[4]

The king, in short, is assimilated to the sun-god, who begets himself anew every morning.[5] The hierogamic material in the Pyramid Texts,

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other gods" (Mercer, PT, I, p. 3). Riemschneider does propose that "die Heilige Hochzeit im Grab gefeiert wird, weil sie zur Auferstehung notwendig ist, da nichts werden kann, was nicht erzeugt ist" (Augengott . . ., p. 239). This conjecture is both conceivable and in keeping with the interpretation here advanced. Where, however, is one to find any reference to such a sepulchral "celebration"?

[1] Cf. PT, I, 532a-b and 1416c-1417a.

[2] Ibid., 388c. Cf. also Mercer's commentary on 388a, ibid., II. Jacobsohn emphasizes that the word translated "united" bears the full implication of "geschlechtliche Vereinigen" (Die dogmatische Stellung, p. 21).

[3] PT, I, 1687a-1688c.

[4] Ibid., 1835a-c.

[5] "The Egyptians insisted that, where there is birth, there must have been conception. The god or the king, to be reborn, must beget himself upon the mother-goddess. The god (or the king) possessed the miraculous power to achieve this" (Kingship, pp. 168-69).

therefore, "does not bear witness to the king's divine origin, but it holds out a promise of immortality."[1] It certainly does not refer to a Sacred Marriage, as defined in this study.

The Divine Birth as a Continuously Evolving Mystery

If there was anything which might be called a hieros gamos in ancient Egypt, the survey thus far would seem to point to the divine/royal birth as its most likely context. Materials already brought forward from varied eras at least suggest that a particular representation of this phenomenon may have maintained itself throughout a major portion of Egyptian history. Moret was willing to claim much more:

> Ces scènes de la nativité du Pharaon existaient à toutes les époques, dans tous les temples et pour le compte de tous les rois d'Égypte: les tableaux et les textes de Deir el Bahari et de Louxor nous donneraient, dans ce cas, la théorie générale de la naissance du roi.[2]

The next task, therefore, will be to see how much of this kind of claim can be sustained.

Historical summary of the evidence

A chronological sketch might ascend almost to the middle of the third millennium B.C. Such antiquity requires the supposition that the Papyrus Westcar has preserved a literary reflection of the belief, current from the Fourth Dynasty onward, that the Pharaoh was the "Son of Re."[3] In support of this supposition, it has been noted that the account given in the Papyrus of the birth of the divine children definitely displays traces of a liturgical style.[1]

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[1] Kingship, p. 174.

[2] Du caractère . . ., p. 49.

[3] Cf. ARE, II, #187.

If the origins of the Westcar tale are located in the Fourth Dynasty (ca. 2565-2440), there is then a hiatus of nearly a millennium until the Eighteenth Dynasty funerary temple of Hatshepsut (1484-1469). Breasted confidently links the two mileposts,[2] but his proposal that the Deir el Bahari scenes were copied from inherited models has been variously received.[3] There is no question, at any rate, that they are virtually duplicated in the reliefs of Amenhotep III (*ca*. 1402-1364) at Luxor.[1] Some undated and fragmentary remains in the temple of Mut at Karnak may also belong to the same period.[2] Indeed, there are even grounds for including the heretical Akh-en-aton (1364-1347) in this development.[3]

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[1] "Il trahit, pour la mise en scène de l'accouchement, une telle precision dans le rôle des dieux, un tel hiératisme dans le séquences de leurs paroles et de leurs gestes qu'on ne peut s'empêcher de penser à une cérémonie liturgique" (MTE, p. 496). Cf. Erman, Literature . . ., pp. 44-46. It ought to be noted, however, that even though the main outlines of the story were ancient, these stylistic elements might nonetheless be late.

[2] "The meagreness of the surviving fragments of the court poem makes a comparison with the folk-tale a very brief matter, but enough of the former is preserved to show that one quotes from the other, or both quote from a common source in traditional stock phrases long orally current. For the same gods figure at the birth in both, and at least in two incidents the same words are employed by both" (ARE, II, #188). Wilson remarks, much more tentatively, that "we do not know precisely what the Egyptian of the Old Kingdom meant when he stated that the pharaoh was the physical son of Re, coming from the body of the sun-god. Perhaps the situation known from the Eighteenth Dynasty may be extended backward into the old times" (Culture . . ., p. 97).

[3] "That these pictures are composed of conventionally current scenes is shown by the fact (1) that both Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III used almost identically the same scenes in their birth reliefs; (2) that the sculptor of Hatshepsut's scenes copied his traditional models in every detail, including the sex of the child (of course, a boy! This was not to conceal the child's sex, for all the pronouns in the accompanying texts are feminine!); had he been sketching something new, prompted by this particular occasion, his sketches would have been made to suit the occasion" (ibid., #187, n. c). Blackman also adopts this interpretation (Luxor & Its Temples [London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1923], p. 164). Margaret Murray allows for its possibility: "There is no reason to

With Ramses II (1290-1224) the sketch descends another century. On a block re-used (upside down) by Ramses III at Medinet Habu, the

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believe that Hatshepsut's inscription was the first of its kind, but the original, from which both the copies were made, is still unknown" (*Egyptian Temples* [London: Sampson Low, Marston, & Co., n.d.], p. 118). Helene Kantor qualifies it still further: "The lack of earlier evidence makes it difficult to say how much of the iconography of the legitimization sequence was already conventional at the time of Hatshepsut. It is possible that the birth cycle was first worked out here" ("Narration in Egyptian Art," *AJA*, LXI, 1 [1957], p. 48). Campbell, however, demands to know: "Where are the old and traditional sketches, except in the Papyrus Westcar?" (*The Miraculous Birth . . .*, p. 29).

[1] Breasted remarks, in keeping with his position discussed in the previous note, that they "are taken from the same sources as those of Hatshepsut" (*ARE*, II, #841).

[2] "Nous avons une représentation de naissance royale comme nous en rencontrons dans deux temples de la XVIIIme dynastie et dans les mammisis de Basse-Époque. Les scènes de Deir el-Bahari et de Louxor me paraissent avoir plus d'analogies avec les notres que celles du mammisi d'Edfou" (Geo. Nagel, "Décoration d'un Temple de Mout à Karnak," *Archiv Orientální*, Vol. XX, Nos. 1-2 [1952], p. 94). Nothing of the hierogamic scene itself is to be found in these remains, which are altogether so fragmentary as to make the whole analogy conjectural in the extreme. Cf. pls. IV and V, following p. 99.

[3] The concept of the divine generation of the Pharaoh was so pervasive, says Bonnet, that "selbst Amenophis IV. erhält sie trotz seiner Ablehnung der anthropomorphen Gottesvorstellung aufrecht. Wie es scheint, baute er sie dadurch in seine Lehre ein, dass er eine Empfängnis der Königin durch die Strahlen des Aton statuierte" (*RAR*, p. 383b). The persistence of the royal ideology is unmistakably revealed in "The Hymn to the Aton." Akh-en-aton is still "the Son of Re" (*ANET*, p. 370a), as well as "thy beloved son" (*ibid.*). No one knows the Aton "save thy son . . . who came forth from thy body" (*ibid.*, p. 371a).

divine conception of the former king is depicted in a manner markedly resembling the Eighteenth Dynasty reliefs.[1] There are also textual fragments suggestive of the earlier speeches.[2]

Again the evidence skips almost a thousand years, emerging once more in the *mammisi* dating from the reign of Nectanebo I (378-360). Despite the length of the interval, the dependence of the post-imperial structures on those of the New Kingdom seems reasonably certain.[3]

A popular tale associating Nectanebo II (359-341) and the mother of Alexander (ruled Egypt 332-323) may or may not deserve to be introduced at this point in the chronology.[4] It quite possibly had its origin in a pilgrimmage which Alexander made to the shrine of the Libyan Amon.[1] At any rate, it recounts how "Nectanebos, the last king of Egypt,"[2] fled in disguise to Macedonia, where he represented himself to Phillip's queen, Olympias, as a prophet and magician. He revealed to her that Amon, in the guise of Nectanebos himself, would impregnate her with a son.[3] "And he, when he arose from her, smote her belly and said: 'O child, remain forever unconquered, supreme!"[4] To be sure, this is not "evidence" of the same sort as that spread out on the temple walls, but it may well have been prompted by the presence of such inscriptional materials, and the concept to which they bore witness.[5]

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[1] Campbell, *The Miraculous Birth . . .*, p. 48, and the plate facing p. 49.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[3] "Il ne fait aucun doute pour moi que la *salle de la naissance* d'Hatshopsouitou et celle d'Aménôthès III sont le prototype du [*mammisi*] ptolémaïque" (Émile Chassinat, "À propos de deux tableaux du *Mammisi* d'Edfou," *Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*, Vol. X [1912], p. 192). Nectanebo's structure had not then been identified. When it was, Chassinat concluded that it "marque la transition entre la chambre de la nativité royale des temples du Nouvel Empire et les Mammisi gréco-romains" (*Le Mammisi d'Edfou* ["MIFAO," Vol. XVI, Fasc. 2; Cairo: L'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1939], p. xvii). For the relevant Eighteenth Dynasty and Ptolemaic texts, see above, pp. 112-13 and 117.

[4] Pseudo-Callisthenes, *The Life of Alexander of Macedon*, trans. and ed. Elizabeth Hazelton Haight (New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1955). The editor avers that "it was written probably about 300 A.D., but there are indications that an earlier version was written shortly after Alexander's death (*ibid.*, p. 2). The story in question takes up i, 1-13 of the *Life*. Maspero speaks of it as "inseré dans le roman . . . vers le III^e^ siècle après notre ère. Le récit n'était probablement, à l'origine, qu'un décalque en prose des scènes traditionnelles figurées à Louxor par exemple, et il se bornait à exposer comment Amon, ayant voulu délivrer sa Terre Entière des barbares persans qui l'opprimaient,

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s'était rendu le nuit près d'Olympias" ("Comment Alexandre devint dieu en Égypte," *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie Égyptiennes* ["Bibliothèque Égyptologique," ed. G. Maspero, Vol. XXVIII; Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1912], Vol. VI, p. 281).

[1] "Alexander consulted Ammon as naturally as he had consulted Apollo of Delphi, the two visits being coupled in the tradition . . . He certainly did not go to Ammon to be recognised as a god for the Greek world or for anything else . . . The priest greeted Alexander as son of Ammon; he could do no other, for Alexander came to him as Pharaoh, and, like every other Pharaoh, was already to Egyptians the son of Amon-Re" (W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great: I: Narrative* [Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 1948], p. 43).

[2] Pseudo-Callisthenes, *ibid.*, i, 1.

[3] *Ibid.*, i, 2-6.

[4] *Ibid.*, i, 7.

[5] "Le récit du pseudo-Callisthène est donc le développement naturel de l'idée qu'Alexandre, roi d'Égypte, devait être le fils du dieu de qui descendaient tous les rois" (Maspero, *Études . . .*, VI, p. 286). Breasted adopted Maspero's position (*Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* [New York: Harper & Row, 1959], p. 16 and n. 2). Hocart, in turn, refers to Breasted in support of the former's contention that there was a "world-wide diffusion of divine kingship" in the ancient era (*Kingship*, p. 15).

Finally, then, the historical survey crosses the transition from Greek to Roman hegemony. At the temple of Erment, no longer standing, it was Ptolemy XVI Caesarion (45-44) whose irregular heritage was ingeniously legitimatized and assimilated within the mystery of the divine/royal birth.[1] At Denderah, it is possible that the Roman Emperor Trajan was also thus recognized.[2]

Mystery pro and con

The attempt to interpret the foregoing sketch as the evolution of a single concept encounters two major difficulties. One is the substantial gaps in the evidence.[3] The other is the marked transition from the birth of the king in the Theban inscriptions to the birth of the young god of the triad in those of the _mammisi_.

Against the first objection there may be adduced once more the generally conservative nature of Egyptian cultural history.[4] In such a context it remains at least conceivable that manifestations widely separated in time might nonetheless have continued to be testimonies to a consistent point of view.[1]

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[1] Cf. Maspero's colorful reconstruction of the developments leading up to this event (_Études . . ._, VI, pp. 278-79).

[2] Moret, _Du caractère . . ._, p. 70. Disputed by Murray, _Egyptian Temples_, p. 64. See above, p. 116, n. 2.

[3] "Il faut bien marquer ici les énormes lacunes de notre information. Elles sont d'abord géographiques. Nous ne savons rien du Delta. . . . Mais chronologiquement nous nous trouvons aussi devant des vides importants. Un conte du Moyen Empire nous permet d'entrevoir l'origine du mystère à Héliopolis à la V^{e} dynastie. Puis c'est un trou noir jusqu'au début du nouvel empire et c'est encore l'obscurité de la XX^{e} jusqu'à la XXX^{e} dynastie" (_MTE_, pp. 495-96).

[4] _Ibid._, p. 494. See above, p. 105 and n. 1.

Against the second objection, it may be observed again that the concepts of divine and royal birth were in fact intermingled in the Ptolemaic temples.[2] This had also been true in the Theban scenes, though in another sense. So it was altogether appropriate that their designs should be appropriated by the Hellenistic artists.[3] The evolution of the "mystery of the divine birth" may therefore be seen as an inherently connected development,[1] perhaps carrying over even into eras and movements beyond the scope of the present study.[2]

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[1] Daumas suggests, therefore, that "nous possédons à l'heure actuelle six recensions du livre de la naissance divine qui sont, par ordre chronologique, celle de Deir el Bahari, de Louxor, de Nectanébo à Dendara, de Philae, d'Edfou, de Trajan derechef à Dendara" (*ibid*., p. 382).

[2] "In the sanctuary the whole story of the birth of the Divine Child is represented on the walls. The mother is Hathor, but the father is not her official consort Horus of Edfu, but Amon of Thebes; and the fruit of the union is Nectanebo himself. This carries on the tradition of the divine birth of the Pharaoh, of which the earliest examples are found on the walls of Hatshepsut's temple at Dêr el Bahri and Amenhotep III's temple at Luxor" (Murray, *Egyptian Temples*, p. 63). The combination of the two themes was ingeniously accomplished, as described by Chassinat: "Dans les temples thébains, on a toujours représenté deux nouveaus-nés: l'un est l'enfant royal, l'autre son *ka*. Ptolémée Évergète II, obeissant à un sentiment manifestment plus politique que religieux, s'est fait figurer à la place du second. . . . Il y a là, en fait, juxtaposition des concepts en principle fort différents auxquels répondent le *Per-mesou* des temples du Nouvel Empire et le Mammisi, le premier étant exclusivement le lieu de naissance d'un roi, le second celui de la naissance d'un dieu" (*Le Mammisi d'Edfou*, Fasc. 2, pp. xvi-xvii).

[3] "Immerhin beruhren sich Gottes- und Königslegende in der Gleichheit des Themas, und für den Äg. verweben sie sich vollends; denn auch der König ist Gottessohn. So übernehmen denn die G. ihren Bildschmuck von den königlichen Geburtsraumen der Tempel. Nicht nur im Thema, sondern auch weit in die Einzelfassung hinein ist er hier wie dort von der Formung des kindlichen Körpers durch Chnum bis zu der Darreichung des Neugeborenen an seinen Vater der gleiche, ja gelegentlich leuchtet bei den ptol. Bildern der Untersinn durch, dass sich in der Geburt des Gottes zugleich die des Königs vollziehe" ("Geburtshaus," *RAR*, p. 210a).

Celebration and Celebrants

Was the divine/royal birth enacted?

What this survey has not yet demonstrated, however, is that the myth of the Egyptian ruler's divine conception was ever ritually enacted by human representatives. The festivals of Opet and Edfu seem in some sense to have been hierogamic, but refer entirely to divine beings and their images. The texts of the Min processional allude tantalizingly to the king and queen, but the arguments for their ritual congress are scarcely convincing. The imagery of Min's self-generation may indeed have been understood to afford a kind of annual renewal of the Pharaoh's divinity, but there is certainly no evidence that this sexual imagery was ritually realized.

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[1] "L'histoire du mystère de la naissance divine est significative: peu à peu tous les dieux entrent dans le jeu pour 'faire'le roi. Khnoum le façonne, au moins dès la XVIII^{e} dynastie; mais Ptah le sculptera dès la XIX^{e}. Les déesses, d'abord, aident à le mettre au monde. Puis, après la XXV^{e} dynastie sans doute, ce sont elles qui lui donnent naissance. Mais sous form d'un dieu dont il devient l'hypostase: il est Harpocrate à Philae, Panibtaouipakhroti à Kom-Ombo, Harsomtous à Edfou, Harprê à Ermant, Ihy à Dendara" (Daumas, "Le sens de la royauté Égyptienne," RHR, Vol. CLX [1961], pp. 144-45).

[2] "Bien entendu il n'est nullement question de voir une sorte de source de la théologie chrètienne dans les notions de théologie royale que nous venons d'analyser dans le mystère égyptien de la naissance divine. . . . Pourtant, si l'on veut comprendre comment la conception, si extraordinaire au premier abord, d'un homme-dieu a pu naître et se développer, il peut être utile de remarquer que la connaissance même indirecte de la théologie égyptienne avait pu créer un climat favorable qui permit aux tâtonnements initiaux de l'interprétation chrètienne de trouver un echo" (MTE, pp. 509-10).

The scene inscribed in the Eighteenth Dynasty temples has seemed more promising, since the queen and her divine/human offspring plainly take part in it.[1] "On est induit à se demander," wrote Maspero, "s'ils . . . reproduisent un ensemble de scènes réelles qui se répétaient à l'accouchement des reines."[2] An affirmative answer was, he thought, unavoidable,[3] and others have followed him in this opinion.[4]

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[1] "The temple of Luxor, as already pointed out, was called the Southern Harîm of Amun. Was the union of the god with the queen supposed to take place therein? If so that would account for the scenes of the begetting and birth of the Pharaoh being depicted on the walls of one of the rooms of the temple" (A. M. Blackman, "On the Position of Women in the Ancient Egyptian Hierarchy," The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology, Vol. VII, Parts 1-2 [1921], p. 18). The word "harem" seems, however, to arise in the context of the Opet festival (see above, p. 120, n. 1), and there are no obvious grounds for linking it with the reliefs describing Amenhotep III's miraculous birth.

[2] Journal des Savants (Juillet, 1899), p. 406.

[3] The king, of course, played the role of Amon. The other gods were represented by masked actors and actresses, while the double images of the new-born heir to the throne consisted of puppets molded in the course of the ceremonies. "D'une manière générale, on doit se persuader que tous les tableaux tracés sur les temples, et dans lesquels la personne du roi entre en jeu, repondaient à une action matérielle, où des personnages déguisés remplissaient le rôle des dieux" (ibid.).

[4] "Je crois, comme M. Maspero, que les scènes gravées sur les murs des temples correspondaient à la pure réalité" (Moret, Du caractère, p. 72). Maspero and Moret are then the source of Frazer's position: "We shall probably not err in assuming, with some eminent authorities, that the ceremonies of the nativity of the Pharaohs, thus emblazoned on the walls of Egyptian temples, were copied from the life; in other words, that the carved and painted scenes represent a real drama, which was acted by masked men and women whenever a queen of Egypt was brought to bed" (The Magic Art, II, p. 133).

If it is supposed, then, that the mystery was acted out, upon what stage did the play take place? The _mammisis_ of later times might have furnished an appropriate setting,[1] but such may hardly be said of Hatshepsut's temple.[2] The hypothesis may be saved only by supposing a now-vanished _mammisi_ to have existed in the Eighteenth Dynasty,[3] and an explanation founded on such postulated evidence is hardly very satisfying.

Moreover, the supposition that the hierogamy was physically reenacted in later times is seriously weakened by differences already noted between the Theban and the post-imperial reliefs. In the former, Amon's sexual activity with the queen was sufficiently explicit to reduce Breasted to Latin.[4] Even in the most complete of the later texts, however, Amon's role is restricted to "giving the breath of life."[5]

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[1] "Les chapelles de la nativité, que qu'en soit le type, n'étaient pas seulement, comme on l'a toujours pensé, le lieu d'accouchement des déesses-mères, mais une sorte d'appartement secret où s'accomplissaient tous les actes de la génération et où l'enfant divin restait aux mains des nourrices" (Chassinat, _BIFAO_, X, pp. 191-92).

[2] "Le caractère funéraire du temple de Deir el-Bahari ne permet pas de supposer que celui-ci ait servi de _mammisi_ à Hatshopsouitou" (_ibid._, p. 192, n. 1). Moreover, as Daumas points out, such a proposal would involve a rather obvious anachronism: "Le reine Ahmès ne vient point s'unir au roi et mettre son enfant au monde dans l'incommode galerie du temple de Deir el-Bahari, qui, au surplus, n'était point construit" (_MTE_, p. 401).

[3] "On peut cependant induire du fait de leur existence [the birth scenes] qu'il y eut à Thèbes un temple auquel elles ont été empruntées et où la reine avait été conçue et enfantée" (Chassinat, _ibid._, p. 192).

[4] See above, p. 113.

[5] See above, p. 117. Chassinat acknowledged this difference, but tended to discount its importance (_BIFAO_, X, pp. 192-93).

Daumas concludes, therefore, that "si une hiérogamie véritable a jamais existe dans les temples égyptiens . . . le jeu liturgique ne comportait plus depuis longtemps aucune union sexuelle réelle."[1]

For the more explicit Eighteenth Dynasty scenes, then, there are no corresponding "birthhouses," whereas from the texts preserved in the mammisis, virtually every trace of a sexual union has vanished. Therefore it seems more sober to assume that in the mystery play, if indeed there was one, the central event was mimetic rather than actual.[2]

A survey of sacerdotal personnel

The title "Wife of the God," sometimes borne by Egyptian queens, has also been the occasion for supposing the union to have been an actual one.[3] The title is indeed suggestive, but when examined more closely, its testimony to the practice of the hieros gamos in ancient Egypt proves to be merely apparent.

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[1] MTE, p. 400.

[2] "Mais dans ce portique [at Deir el Bahari], une mystère, représenté de temps à autre, entretenait en quelque sorte l'origine divine de la reine et l'union, déjà, y était purement symbolique. Lorsque, après les temps iniques de la domination étrangere, la divinité du roi fut assumée par l'enfant dieu des triades locales, on n'évoque plus que l'union mystique d'Amon et de la déesse. C'est, nous semble-t-il, la manière la plus logique, et la plus conforme aux sources, de nous représenter les choses" (ibid., p. 401).

[3] "As the embodiment of Hathor," says James, "the queen as 'the God's Wife' and the musician-priestesses as his concubines under her rule, exercised their functions in the 'Southern Harîm of Amon' (i.e. the temple at Luxor)" (The Cult . . ., p. 65). Where, however, are we to learn just what these "functions" were, and how they were "exercised"? See above, p. 139, n. 1.

The office, first of all, is attested only for the Eighteenth through the Twenty-Sixth dynasties (1560-525), which of course falls short of the entire era of the mammisis (probably not earlier than 378).[1] Moreover, the earlier members of the line included not only queens but also royal daughters; on occasion, mother and daughter held the tile simultaneously.[2] Among these was Hatshepsut herself--a fact which must have made the enactment of the "mystery" very complicated indeed during her reign![3] Still further, it may be noted that none of the last four incumbents was ever wedded to an earthly king at all.[4]

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[1] Of the thirty women thus far discovered to have borne the title, two cannot be dated (Constantin Emil Sander-Hansen, Das Gottesweib des Amun ["Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab.: Historisk-filologiske Skrifter," Vol. I, No. 1; København; Ejnar Munksgaard, 1940], pp. 5-10). Cf. ARE, II, #34, 110.

[2] Sander-Hansen asserts, in fact, that "'Gottesweib' des Amun war anfangs der Titel einer Königstochter, die später Königin werden sollte, Schon als Kind so genannt, wurde sie dem spätern König angetraut; starb sie jedoch vor seiner Thronbesteigung, so wurde der Titel mitsamt dem Gemahl auf eine andere Königstochter übertragen" (ibid., p. 13). Lefebvre muses: "Chose curieuse, et qui semble indiquer que cette appelation perdit de bonne heure sa signification originelle, ce titre n'est pas seulement porté par des reines qui jouaient leur rôle dans la mystère de la théogamie mais aussi par des jeunes princesses (qui à la vérité pouvaient devenir des épouses royales)" (Histoire des Grands Prêtres d'Amon, p. 37).

[3] Sander-Hansen, ibid., p. 6. Cf. ARE, II, #344, 364.

[4] Sander-Hansen, ibid., p. 15. "Ihr königlicher Gatte war eben Amun" (ibid., n. 4). It is precisely the first of these, Amenirdis I, who is depicted, in a fayence statuette, "sitting on the lap of her divine lover Amun, their arms being flung round one another in close embrace. Such abandon is entirely unexpected in Egyptian art of this period, indeed, as Legrain asserts, it finds no parallel in all Egyptian art outside the productions of certain of the artists and sculptors attached to the court of Akhenaten at El-Amarna" (Blackman, JEA, VII, 1-2, p. 17). Cf. Sander-Hansen, ibid., p. 9; ARE, IV, #940, 946.

The title therefore appears to coincide with the other hierogamic data only in the cases of the mothers of Hatshepsut and Amenhotep III.[1] Although Sander-Hansen briefly follows Maspero and Moret[2] in deducing a "Mysterium" from these two occasions,[3] his ultimate conclusion is that the significance of the office was chiefly political.[4]

It may be of interest to note in passing the clear and somewhat unusual sexual title sometimes added to that of "God's Wife." Certain among them were also styled "hand of the god" or "divine hand."[5]

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[1] The mother of Ramses II should perhaps also be mentioned (Sander-Hansen, *ibid.*, p. 7), although the extant reliefs in her case are quite fragmentary. See above, pp. 133-34.

[2] See above, p. 139, nn. 2-4.

[3] "Wie diese Ehestiftung des Gottes mit seiner irdischen Gemahlin und Königin sich abspielt wissen wir aus zwei Beispielen . . . Diese Berichte stimmen so auffallend mit einander Überein, dass hier ohne Zweifel von einem Mysterium die Rede ist" (*Das Gottesweib . . .*, p. 16. Cf. also *ibid.*, n. 1). The agreement between the reliefs is neither striking nor necessarily significant if one is a copy of the other, as seems perfectly possible.

[4] "Die Bedeutung des Gottesweibertums erweist sich also vom Anfang bis zum Ende als eine hauptsächlich politische. Die Funktionen im Götterkult haben nur den einen Zweck, den politischen Handlungen eine religiöse Farbung zu geben, und die eigentliche religiöse Bedeutung scheint deshalb gering zu sein" (*ibid.*, p. 51). For an account of the development of the office after the end of the New Kingdom, see *ARE*, IV, #935-58, 988A-J; and Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, pp. 318-19, 343-44, 354-55.

[5] "Le titre se rencontre pour la premier fois, semble-t-il, sur un monument d'Hatshepsout et de Thoutmôsis III; une fille de ce roi, la princesse Amenmérit, le porte également, ainsi que la mère d'Amenophis II; sous Ramses III, une 'divine main' participa aux fêtes jubilaires de l'an 29 mais nous ignorons son nom et sa qualité" (Lefebvre, *Histoire*, pp. 37-38). Cf. *ARE*, IV, #414, for the last-mentioned reference. "Der Titel wird allerdings erst in der Spätzeit allgemein" (Sander-Hansen, *Das Gottesweib . . .*, p. 19).

Adolph Erman proposed that the term was derived from a combination of two creation accounts: in one, Atum brought forth Shu and Tefnut by masturbation;[1] and in the other, they were procreated by the sun-god and the heaven-goddess.[2] The resulting title became a part of Theban theology with the assimilation of the sun-god and Amon, and the sacerdotal "God's Wife" was also styled "Divine Hand."[3] "Hoffentlich," said Erman, "sind die Prinzessinnen, die diesen Titel trugen, sich nicht klar gewesen über die widerliche Vorstellung, auf der er beruhte."[4]

This section may be concluded with some consideration of the widespread employment of "concubines" in the service of both gods and goddesses.[5] In many cases the divine harems were headed by a "Chief of the

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[1] Cf. *ANET*, pp. 5a, 6b; *PT*, I, 1248a-d. Lefebvre terms it "l'acte sauvage d'Atoum" (*Histoire . . .*, p. 37).

[2] "Und so vereinte man nun diese beiden Vorstellungen und bezeichnete auch diese Göttin als die Hand des Gottes" ("Beiträge zur ägyptischen Religion," *Sitzungsberichte der königlich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: philosophisch-historischen Klasse*, Vol. XLV [9 November, 1916], p. 1145).

[3] "Um die Gleichsetzung der irdischen Gemahlin mit Hathor, der Gotteshand, zu begründen, ist aber am Ende nur die Identifikation Amuns mit Atum anzunehmen, die schon zu der Zeit, da das Gottesweib zum erstenmal den Titel führt, erfolgt sein muss" (Sander-Hansen, *Das Gottesweib . . .*, p. 19).

[4] *SPAW*, XLV, p. 1146.

[5] "Other gods besides Theban Amūn had earthly concubines assigned to them, namely Onuris, Harshef Khons, Min, Sobk, Thōth, Osiris, Iunmutef, and possibly Khnum of Hermopolis, and Upawāwet of Asyūt. . . . Strange to relate, we even hear of concubines of certain goddesses with a presiding Chief of the Concubines in each case, namely of Mut, Ubastet, Isis, and Nekhbet" (Blackman, *JEA*, VII, 1-2, p. 16). It is "strange," in fact, only if the persons so titled were seriously conceived as carrying out some sexual function with the goddess herself.

Concubines,"[1] an office which in the Theban cult was ordinarily filled by the wife of the high priest of Amon.[2] In view of the prevalence of human concubinage throughout Egyptian history,[3] it seems acceptable to hypothesize that in the temples "der Kult auch für das sexuelle Verlangen des Gottes Sorge zu tragen habe."[4]

When it is asked how this service was performed, however, a univocal answer appears to be unattainable. It seems generally agreed that the "concubines" of the deity served in a musical capacity in the cult.[5] Whether they also acted out the sexual function implied in their title is a question on which there simply is no evidence for most of Egyptian history.[6] For the late period, the testimony of Herodotus asserts that these women were forbidden sexual activity.[1] Still later, Strabo testifies to a quite different practice,[2] but this evidence lies substantially outside the scope of the present study.[3]

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[1] Cf. preceding note, and Gauthier, _Le personnel . . ._, p. 110.

[2] "Parfois aussi la femme du Deuxième prophète" (Lefebvre, _Histoire . . ._, p. 35). Bonnet cites evidence that the office might also be held by "angesehene Frauen aus Laienkreisen" (_RAR_, p. 578b).

[3] Mercer cites evidence for both kings and commoners in the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms (_The Religion of Ancient Egypt_, pp. 388, 392-94, 398-99). For references to royal harems in these periods, see _ARE_, I, #256, 307, 598; III, #267; IV, #844.

[4] _RAR_, p. 579a.

[5] "Les recluses du dieu étaient problement, sans que toutefois la chose soit attestée de façon certaine, recrutées parmi les chanteuses consacrées au service de ce dieu" (Gauthier, _Le personnel . . ._, p. 112). Blackman earlier had spoken of this as "the generally accepted view," and adduced evidence in support of it (_JEA_, VII, 1-2, pp. 15-16).

[6] "Ob und in welcher Weise eine geschlechtliche Funktion der P. im Kult zur Darstellung kam, wissen wir freilich nicht" ("Pallakide," _RAR_, p. 579a-b). Lefebvre disputes Maspero's suggestion that they acted as "un collège de courtisanes sacrée." Instead, he muses, "peut-être formaient-elles simplement l'escorte et comme la garde d'honneur" for "la divine épouse d'Amon" (_Histoire . . ._, p. 35).

The Mystery and Its Purpose

The Pharaoh's right to rule

One point seems to stand out clearly: the various manifestations of the "mystery of the divine birth" all sought to give support to the rightful rule of the monarch in question. To ask more specifically how this support was conceived to function is to become involved in a welter of partially conflicting interpretations. Since each of them modifies, rather than contradicts, the thesis just put forward,[1] they will be considered only generally and briefly.

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[1] See above, p. 82, n. 1. He adds, in another place, that "the Egyptians first made it a point of religion to have no intercourse with women in the sacred places, and not to enter them without washing, after such intercourse. Almost all other nations, except the Greeks and the Egyptians, act differently, regarding man as in this matter under no other law than the brutes" (ii, 64).

[2] "But to Zeus, whom they hold highest in honour, they dedicate a maiden of greatest beauty and most illustrious family (such maidens are called 'pallades' by the Greeks); and she prostitutes herself, and cohabits with whatever men she wishes until the natural cleansing of her body takes place; and after her cleansing she is given in marriage to a man; but before she is married, after the time of her prostitution, a rite of mourning is celebrated for her" (Geography, xvii, 1, 46).

[3] In any case this practice cannot have characterized the last-known "Wives" of Amon. "The sacerdotal princesses seem to have held office to an advanced age, unless they happened to be supplanted. Nitokris was installed as Wife of the God in the ninth year of Psammetikhos I and did not die till the fourth year of Apries, when she had been sacerdotal princess for sixty-three years. ᶜEnkhnesneferibrēᶜ held office into the reign of Psammetikhos III, when she was at least eighty years old" (Blackman, JEA, VII, 1-2, p. 19). Cf. ARE, IV, #938, 944, 988G. The connection drawn by Herodotus seems to have had at least a certain accuracy. See above, pp. 80-81 and p. 81, nn. 1-2.

The circumstances surrounding the establishment of the Fifth Dynasty might suggest, for example, that the Papyrus Westcar tale was aimed at repairing the defective origins of King Userkaf.[2] Such an interpretation, however, would lose its force in the cases of the Eighteenth Dynasty.[3]

An expanded account would therefore suppose that the Deir el Bahari reliefs were an attempt to justify the ascension of a woman to the throne.[4] In fact, Hatshepsut was the third queen to rule as a female Pharaoh.[5] Moreover, such an explanation hardly accounts for the use of the same imagery by Amenhotep and Ramses II.

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[1] Campbell contends that the Deir el Bahari and Luxor reliefs are simply "the culmination of the assertion that Amon and Ra were one and the same. It was necessary, therefore, that Amon should be exhibited as a father-god" (The Miraculous Birth . . . , p. 6-7). Even if this interpretation were adopted, it would remain true that Amon thereby takes his place in the concept of the divine origin of the Pharaoh's rule.

[2] So Drioton et Vandier, L'Égypte, p. 89.

[3] "Or la légitimité d'Hatshepsout, pas plus du rest que celle d'Aménophis III, n'était contestable" (ibid.).

[4] Cf. James, Ancient Gods, p. 110; Steindorff and Seele, When Egypt . . . , p. 41).

[5] "Twice before in Egypt's earlier history a queen had usurped the kingship, but it was a wholly new departure for a female to pose and dress as a man" (Gardiner, Egypt of the Pharaohs, p. 183). They were Nitocris, whose reign presaged the end of the Sixth Dynasty (ibid., pp. 102, 436), and Sebekhnofru, who stood in the same relationship to the Twelfth (ibid., pp. 141, 439). Maspero, following Naville, held that it was Hatshepsut's "caractère" which caused her to affect masculine dress (Journal des Savants [Juillet, 1899], p. 403).

A wide variety of political conditions prevailed in the post-Rammesid centuries. Nonetheless, such rulers as the High Priest Hrihor (*ca*. 1090-1085),[1] the Libyan Sheshonk I (935-914),[2] the Nubian Piankhi (751-710),[3] and the Saïte prince Psammetichus I (663-609)[4] continued to style themselves "Son of Re, of his body, "divine emanation," and to refer regularly to Amon as their "father."

It is out of the brief period of independence from Persian domination (404-341)[5] that the earliest extant *mammisi* has survived. The continuation of this architectural and religious form, at least into the second century of our era, preserves for Greek and Roman rulers that claim to divine generation in which Egyptian stability had so long been grounded.[6]

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[1] A pretender to the throne during the ephemeral reign of Ramses XI (Gardiner, *ibid.*, p. 304). Cf. *ARE*, IV, #605, 626.

[2] Cf. Gardiner, *ibid.*, pp. 326-27; *ARE*, IV, #700, 721.

[3] Cf. Gardiner, *ibid.*, pp. 335-40; *ARE*, IV, #817.

[4] Cf. Gardiner, *ibid.*, p. 352; *ARE*, IV, #942.

[5] Cf. Gardiner, *ibid.*, pp. 372-78.

[6] "La chose était requise par le rhythme même de l'univers comme nous l'avons vu. C'est pourquoi les prêtres durent imaginer que le pouvoir était délegué, momentanément au moins à celui, même étranger, que les dieux avaient fait maître de l'Égypte. Ce n'est point par flagornerie que Oudjahorresne de Saïs composa la titulature royale de Cambyse ou que, plus tard, les Ptolémées puis les Césars recurent un protocole complet de roi d'Égypte. Sans cela la structure même de la vision du monde qu'avaient les anciens Égyptiens, eut été anéantie" (*MTE*, p. 502).

The absence of fertility motifs

Finally, it is important to note that the assurance of fertility in Egypt, while certainly looked upon as a royal function,[1] does not appear in any direct connection with the "mystery of the divine birth."[2] If the latter may indeed be characterized as a *hieros gamos*, it apparently differs in its mood and intent from that which is depicted in the Mesopotamian documents.

Mesopotamia and Egypt Compared

There is little doubt that the *hieros gamos*, as defined at the beginning of this study, existed in ancient Mesopotamia. The sexual union of Dumuzi/Tammuz and Inanna/Ištar[3] was, at least during some periods, re-presented in the ritual activity of rulers and priestesses.[4] The outcome of this union, however, does not seem to have focused upon offspring in general,[1] nor was the king believed to have been of divine filiation.[2] Agricultural fertility was a pronounced theme in the Sumerian songs, but no longer expressly alluded to in Babylonian and Assyrian texts.[3] The fixing of the king's destiny, on the other hand, remains a consistent motif of the celebration, and indeed of the king's relationship with the goddess in periods from which no hierogamic texts have survived.[4]

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[1] "The herdsman is primarily the pastor, the 'feeder,' and a first responsibility of the state was to see that the people were fed. Thus the king of Egypt was the god who brought fertility to Egypt, produced the life-giving waters, and presented the gods with the sheaf of grain which symbolized abundant food. Indeed, an essential function of his kingship was that of a medicine man, whose magic ensured good crops. In one of the ceremonials of kingship, the pharaoh encircled a field four times as a rite of conferring fertility upon the land. He controlled the water which made Egypt and made her fertile. 'The Nile is at his service, and he opens its cavern to give life to Egypt!" (*Intellectual Adventure*, pp. 79-80). Cf. also *PT*, I, 507a-509c; commentary in III.

[2] It is true that at Edfu, the Sacred Marriage of Hathor and Horus "is combined unmistakably with harvest rites" (Fairman, *BJRL*, XXXVII, 1, p. 200). Nonetheless, in the inscriptions there is nothing to suggest that the union of the god and goddess is in itself in any way productive of fertility.

[3] See above, p. 46.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 76-78.

In Egypt, on the contrary, this study has not revealed a similar pattern of belief and celebration.[5] A variety of hierogamic traits have been surveyed, but there seems to be no justification for weaving them into a single ceremonial pattern.

There apparently were Sacred Marriages conducted for Amon and Hathor at Luxor,[6] Horus and Hathor at Edfu,[7] and Amon and Hathor at Denderah.[8] In none of these hierogamies, however, is there any epigraphic or monumental support for the proposition that they were reënacted by the king and the queen.[9]

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[1] See above, p. 91.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-96.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 55, 86-90.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

[5] Hooke admits that in general the Egyptian differences "have almost submerged those common elements to which I have referred" (see above, p. 24, n. 1).

[6] See above, pp. 118-21.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 122-24.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[9] The allusion to Haremhab in the Opet inscription may very well be a sexual euphemism, but it hardly provides the basis for reconstructing an accompanying ritual or identifying his partner. See above, p. 121.

There are varied materials which may well have belonged to an evolutionary development of the concept of the royal birth. In the Papyrus Westcar, however, it was the wife of the priest of Re with whom the god was united,[1] whereas in the Eighteenth Dynasty reliefs it was the queen.[2] In the post-imperial mammisis no human figure participated in the hierogamy,[3] though it would seem to have been successfully argued that the king was somehow to be identified with the divine offspring.[4] Again there is little if any evidence to suggest that these mythical unions were reënacted in rituals employing human representatives.[5]

The one consistent feature in the evolving testimonies is precisely the one which is at most debatably present in the Mesopotamian texts. The unmistakable purpose of the Egyptian inscriptions is to testify to the divine filiation of the reigning monarch,[6] whereas it seems reasonably certain that most Mesopotamian rulers did not make a realistic claim to being the offspring of the gods. In any case, the one Mesopotamian text which does seem to suggest "divinization" does so of the king as a partner in the hieros gamos.[7] In the Egyptian theogamy, it is the divinity of the offspring of the union which is primarily in view. This same fundamental difference prevails with regard to the determination of the king's destiny.

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[1] See above, p. 110.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 112-13.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 148.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 111, n. 3; p. 132, n. 1; pp. 138-41.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 146-48.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Finally, as has been noted, the fertility theme which figured so prominently in the Sumerian hierogamic texts simply does not occur in the Egyptian materials which have been examined. If these materials are to be said to constitute some sort of *hieros gamos*, then it must be added that it differs in every major respect from the Mesopotamian religious phenomenon which is called by the same name.

CHAPTER IV

HIEROGAMIC MYTH AND RITUAL IN ANCIENT CANAAN

The Situation Prior to the Ras Shamra Discoveries

Early in this century Frazer had already put together, out of late Greek and early Christian sources, something of a case for the celebration of a Sacred Marriage by the Phoenician kings of Cyprus.[1] His argument cannot really be said to have established anything, since every logical or causal connection was phrased subjunctively.[2] It may well be that this technique was simply a reflection of Frazer's humility before the masses of data which he had gathered, as Frankfort has contended.[3] In the aftermath of his monumental efforts, however, putative conconclusions have often been transmuted into fundamental assumptions, and that without benefit of additional evidence.

So here, S. H. Hooke took up the supposed hieros gamos, and, merely on the grounds of the historic relations between Cyprus and Byblos, transported the rite deftly to the mainland![1] A decade later, Ivan Engnell extended the relationship by implication to Mari:[2]

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[1] Adonis, Attis, Osiris, I, pp. 41-44, 48-51.

[2] Cf. ibid., pp. 49-50, where the gaps in the data are crossed by the following bridges: "it would appear," "can hardly be dissociated," "we can hardly help concluding," "it appears to be certain," "make it probable," "points to a ceremony," "if that was so," "we may surmise." What is so easily overlooked in this method of reasoning is the fact that if any one of the suppositions is faulty, the argument beyond that point must either be abandoned or reconstructed on sounder principles.

[3] "He was the least theoretical and least dogmatic of scholars" (The Problem of Similarity . . . , p. 5).

> Concerning the *hieros gamos* element we have already seen it present in Mari--and, as I pointed out above, no doubt as an item in the New Year Festival . . . In this connection we remind ourselves, of course, also of the same ritual enacted by the Phoenician king Pygmalion (Pumiaton) with the statue of the goddess.[3]

The frailty of Frazer's scaffolding seems to have been recognized, nonetheless, even by some who employed it in support of their own theorizing. This at least would be the present writer's interpretation of Hooke's reaction to the Ras Shamra discoveries:

> The contemporary evidence from Ras Shamra enables us, for the first time, to get behind the somewhat confused accounts of early Canaanite myth and ritual given by Philo of Byblos, Lucian, Diodorus, and other later Greek writers, and saves us from the necessity of leaning too heavily on them.[4]

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[1] "Since there is a close historical connextion between Cyprus and Byblos--and the myth of Adonis was no doubt carried from Byblos to Paphos--we may regard the form of the myth and ritual prevalent in Cyprus as evidence for the nature of the fertility rites connected with Adonis, as tree- and corn-god, practised at Byblos" ("Traces of the Myth and Ritual Pattern in Canaan," *MAR*, p. 83).

[2] See p. 57, n. 3, above, for Engnell's full claim, which is scarcely supported by the fragmentary and cryptic text quoted on p. 59.

[3] *Studies*, p. 90. What can it possibly mean here to speak of "the same ritual"? Cf. also A. M. Honeyman, "The Phoenician Title *mtrḥ ᶜštrnj*," *RHR*, Vol. CXXI, No. 1 (1940), pp. 5-17. The inscription, found seven times at Carthage and once at Rhodes, is interpreted with the help of Frazer's "evidence" to mean "bridegroom of Astart of Nineveh," (*ibid.*, p. 12). The author muses: "It is hardly to be supposed that [this inscription] . . . was merely an honorific title, with no associated ritual. . . . But as to the details of the ritual we are unfortunately as ignorant as when Frazer suggested on the one hand a sacred marriage to the image of Astarte, and on the other an act of intercourse, with one or more of the sacred harlots of the temple" (*ibid.*, pp. 15-16).

[4] *MAR*, p. 81.

Problems in the Use of the Ugaritic Materials

When Hooke wrote the foregoing lines, however, none of the Ras Shamra texts had yet been published.[1] The problems of interpretation could not be foreseen; in some important respects, three decades have not sufficed for their solution.

The condition of the documents

No amount of time, but only further discoveries, can ever avail to rescue the interpreters from the problem posed by "the mutilated state of most of the tablets."[2] The resulting dilemma is most acute in the case of the seven tablets variously recounting the activities of Baal and Anat.[3] Though the events they describe are assumed to belong together,[4] "there is not yet unanimity among scholars as to the order of those events."[5] The necessarily tentative nature of their ordering is reflected in such titles as "The Baal and ᶜAnat Cycle"[1] and "Poems about Baal and Anath."[2]

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[1] M. Virolleaud's initial account had revealed two myths: "the Hunting of Baal," and "Mot and Aleion" (MAR, p. 78).

[2] De Langhe, MRAK, p. 128.

[3] "The destruction of the tops and bottoms of most of them involves the loss of the catch-lines, by which alone their order can be certainly determined, and also interrupts the story at the beginning and end of most columns" (G. R. Driver, Canaanite Myths and Legends, "Old Testament Studies," Vol. III [Edinburgh: T. &. T. Clark, 1957], p. 11a).

[4] "The series may be incomplete and some of the tablets may not indeed belong to it but be derived from another cycle of myths, as certain inconsistencies appear to indicate" (ibid., p. 11b).

[5] John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament, "Supplements to Vetus Testamentum," Vol. V (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1957), p. 11.

Ironically enough, the difficulties posed by the Ugaritic materials have nowhere been more forcefully stated than by Ivan Engnell, who wrote: "After being engaged upon them for several years I should almost like to say--of course *cum grano salis*!--the more work one expends on them the less one understands them."[3] It is difficult to recognize in this modest sentiment the same author whose interpretations will appear throughout this chapter. Engnell, in any case, was referring to the problems of deciphering and translating the original texts, whereas the present writer must depend on those who have carried this task forward. Since there continues to be serious disagreement among them, it would seem that Albright's early guideline is still worth observing: "Where scholars diverge seriously in their views it is usually unsafe to follow any one interpretation."[4]

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[1] Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature: A Comprehensive Translation of the Poetic and Prose Texts* (Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1949), p. 9. "There is no proof that what we call the Baal and ᶜAnat Cycle was in antiquity ever conceived as a unit" (*ibid.*).

[2] H. L. Ginsberg, ANET, p. 129a. "Not all of the tablets can be declared, with certainty, to be parts of the great epic of Baal and arranged in their proper order within it" (*ibid.*).

[3] *Studies*, p. 109.

[4] *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 38.

The nature of the texts

That the Ras Shamra texts are at least possibly relevant to this study is suggested by the character of the sexual activity occasionally recounted.[1] Baal copulates with a heifer, and the description of El's seduction of two women has been called "one of the frankest and most sensuous [scenes] in ancient Near-Eastern literature."[2]

What is at issue in this investigation, however, is the presumed human representation, at the level of ritual, of actions performed by divine beings in the mythical sphere.[3] Do the present texts manifest the enactment of the hieros gamos on both of these planes?

The early interpreters were confident of an affirmative answer to this question. It seemed possible in 1936 to contend that "though the texts so far published from Ras Shamra do not contain the actual liturgy for the final resurrection of Alein Baal and the marriage of the divine pair, it may now be regarded as certain that such a phase of the liturgy existed."[4] Four years later, the second section of Johannes Pedersen's monumental study appeared with the assertion that "in the Ras Shamra texts we have a complete cult drama."[1]

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[1] "Kennzeichnend für diese [El and Baal] und andere Göttergestalten ist zunächst das sexuelle Moment" (George Fohrer, "Die wiederentdeckte kanaanäische Religion," ThLZ, Vol. LXXVIII, No. 4 [1953], col. 196).

[2] Albright, Archaeology . . . , p. 73. Both Fohrer (ibid., col. 196) and Albright(FSAC, p. 235) also allude to the representations of the naked goddess commonly found in late second millennium B.C. sites.

[3] See above, p. 1.

[4] William Creighton Graham and Herbert Gordon May, Culture and Conscience: An Archaeological Study of the New Religious Past in Ancient Palestine (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1936), p. 133.

More recent students have taken note of a literary quality in the texts which creates some difficulty for a simple cultic explanation of their context.[2] A. S. Kapelrud concedes, therefore, that the cultic interpretation

> need not be taken to imply that the form in which we now have them is precisely that which was used in cultic situations. Presumably they have been polished and modified; and no doubt additions have been made to them in the process of transmission. But it is reasonable to assume that they present the myths in substantially the form in which they were used in the Ugaritic cult, and that they have undergone only minor changes.[3]

The problem which is posed by such a statement is that something is being assumed which needs first of all to be demonstrated.[4] Is there any evidence, in the texts themselves, of their use or reënactment in the context of ritual?

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[1] Israel: Its Life and Culture, Vols. III-IV (Copenhagen: Povl Branner, 1940), p. 441. Neither here nor elsewhere in this work, however, did Pedersen propose that a Sacred Marriage was part of the cult drama at Ugarit.

[2] "When we read the Ras Shamra poems we must realize that we are dealing with a literary treatment of the basic myths, characterized by all the embellishments of artistic fancy, and that they afford no automatic testimony to the manner in which the gods and goddesses were conceived in formal religious usage" (Gaster, "The Religion of the Canaanites," Forgotten Religions, ed. Ferm, p. 116). Cf. also de Langhe: "Les grands poèmes de Ras Shamra-Ugarit semblent dénoter un souci continu de rédaction littéraire, ce qui ne favorise guère l'interprétation par le drame, le jeu et le culte" ("Mythes et rites dans les textes de Ras Shamra," La Nouvelle Clio, Vol. V, Nos. 1-4 [1952], p. 191). The same issue is raised by Fohrer, ThLZ, LXXVIII, 4, cols. 194-95.

[3] The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament, trans. G. W. Anderson (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 67.

[4] "L'école française nous a habitues à la formule 'textes mythologiques et légendaires,' mais plusieurs auteurs préféreraient une des appellations suivantes: rituels, chants rituels, liturgies ou drames cultuels. Le problème soulevé par ces discussions n'est pas une simple

Driver has in fact gathered "various rubrical directions [which] suggest that they must have been designed primarily for recitation."[1] There is, on the edge of one of the Aqhat tablets, a line which Driver translates: "And he shall go back to the passage (beginning): 'Lo! a house!'"[2] In a tablet from the Baal cycle, there is a similar direction, which he renders: "And go back to the passage: When the servitors were sent."[3] Moreover the Nikkal poem, as he notes, gives evidence of having been composed to be sung.[4]

By far the most promising of the texts, from the standpoint of ritual, is that known variously as "Shachar and Shalim," or "The Birth of the Gods." Driver points to a passage which indicates that the texts in general "may have been accompanied by appropriate gestures and even

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querelle de terminologie, mais c'est tout le problème fondamental de la nature et du contenu des textes" (Proceedings, p. 98).

[1] CML, p. 25a. "The poems are not cast in dramatic form, which is not a branch of art or literature ever much cultivated by the Semites, and are not likely to have been acted" (ibid.).

[2] Ibid., p. 67b, 64. Cf. ANET, p. 155b, 225; UL, p. 99, 169.

[3] CML, p. 99a, 43. Essentially the same translation in ANET, p. 134a, 105; and UL, p. 33, 105.

[4] CML, p. 25b. Cf. p. 125a, i 1; p. 127a, 10, 12. Cf. also UL, p. 63, 1; p. 64, 37; p. 65, 40.

ritual acts."[1] His neglect of the remainder of the first section of this text is puzzling, since he himself had noted earlier that it is marked by a series of "rubrical parts, which contain directions to the reciter or performer."[2]

It is in the second portion of the text, however, that the main action is recounted, and it is wholly free of such stage directions.[3] The first section of "Shachar and Shalim" thus stands quite alone amid the Ras Shamra myths and legends: instructions for ritual action are nowhere else to be found.

This being the case, certain questions of methodology may well be reviewed. For until further evidence comes to light, the only grounds we have for assuming the existence of rituals which corresponded to the myths is that assumption itself! It is just such an assumption on which Gaster"s Thespis was founded, and which he articulated unmistakably in the following postulate:

> When, for example, the myth relates that the god of the community's life and fertility--the Tammuz or Adonis type of deity--dies annually and is resurrected, as the symbol of the

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[1] CML, p. 25b. He refers to p. 121a, i 10. Cf. p. 121b, 14-15.

[2] Ibid., p. 22a. "This text divides clearly into two parts. The first contains the rubrics and chants for a public ceremony in honor of two sets of gods named 'the Gods Gracious' and 'the Princes.' The second contains a dramatic myth" (Thespis, p. 406). Gordon, following Gaster, calls it "the libretto of a religious drama with music" (UL, p. 57).

[3] Driver proposes one in R ii 22b-23 (CML, p. 123b). Neither Gordon (UL, p. 61, 56b-57) nor Gaster (Thespis, p. 432, apparently left untranslated) support this rendering. In any case, the direction calls only for recitation. (For Driver's translation, see below, p. 176).

> people's periodic eclipse and revitalization, we must expect to find [underlining mine] in concomitant ritual some ceremony in which the king really or mimetically undergoes the same passion . . . So too, when the union of god and goddess appears as a dominant motif in the myth of such festivals, we must expect to find its punctual counterpart in the ritual 'marriage' of king and chosen hierodule.[1]

The present writer submits that it is not the texts at hand, but only an abstract "principle of correspondence,"[2] which calls forth such an expectation.

Possibly in an effort to bolster what is clearly a *petitio principii*, appeal is also generally made to parallels in other ancient Near Eastern cultures. Thus Gaster contends that "the 'sacred marriage' is, indeed, well attested in the religions of the ancient Near East."[3] Having called in review the customary testimonies from Mesopotamia and Egypt, however, he then observes that "unfortunately, there is as yet no definite evidence of the institution at an early date on Syro-Palestinian soil."[4] This frank admission hardly prepares the reader for the statement which follows shortly thereafter: "The dearth of evidence from Syria and Palestine is compensated, however, by Greek sources, albeit of comparatively late date."[5] This writer is certainly not alone in wondering how such compensation is thought to function, especially with regard to differences of chronology and culture.[1]

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[1] *Forgotten Religions*, ed. Ferm, p. 119. As noted above (p. 14), Gaster appeared four years later to have modified this claim. The revised edition of *Thespis* nonetheless continues to function on the assumption that the myths correspond to something which was at some time acted out (cf. the revised Preface, pp. 12-13).

[2] See above, pp. 14-15. "When we assume the existence of mimes or dramas, we go beyond the evidence of the texts" (De Langhe, *MRAK*, p. 140).

[3] *Thespis*, p. 413. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 414. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 415.

Two other general observations may be made before taking up the various myths and legends in turn. First, they obviously stem from a scribal library, apparently part of the residence of the chief priest, and to some degree supported by royal patronage.[2] Considering the nature of ancient scribal education, it cannot be taken for granted that these particular documents were used in contemporary worship.[3] Even if they were, it is not therefore certain to what degree they represent the practice of popular religion.[4]

It may well be noted, in the second place, that the texts under consideration here are derived from a datable archaeological stratum of a particular city in northern Syria. Again, it may not be taken for granted that the religious beliefs and practices reflected in them were current, either in the same form or at all, in other cities and centuries in Syro-Palestine.[1]

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[1] See above, pp. 23-27, for a more extended discussion of this sort of methodology. Gray says of Gaster: "Often, one feels, his methods are somewhat Frazerian" (LC, p. 9). De Langhe avers that "it is very doubtful whether much is to be gained by a rash imaginative use of parallels from other sources" (MRAK, p. 131). It may be of interest to record Gaster's defense: "The reader may consequently be inclined to suspect that perhaps, after all, we are going beyond the evidence. . . . the method here adopted is, in fact, that pursued by folklorists everywhere in the analysis of tales and legends" (Thespis, p. 326).

[2] Cf. Kapelrud, Discoveries . . . , pp. 14-15. Colophons among the Baal (ANET, pp. 135b, 141b) and KRT (ibid., p. 149b) tablets refer by name to a scribe, chief priest, and king.

[3] This is the kind of enigma which complicates the only hierogamic text thus far uncovered at Mari. See above, p. 58 and n. 2. "The young priests and scribes were made to copy out the ancient texts to give them practice in the art of writing" (Kapelrud, ibid., p. 15).

[4] "Doch vergesse man nicht, dass uns die Texte eben auch nur die Religion der höchsten Schichten vor Augen führen" (Walter Baumgartner, "Ras Schamra und das Alte Testament: II," Theologische Rundschau, N.F., Vol. XIII [1941], p. 175).

The Baal-Anat Cycle

A house for Baal

The issue of providing a suitable habitation for Baal figures prominently in this cycle of poems.[2] Gray, who supposes that Baal at this point "has not quite emerged from his seasonal eclipse,"[3] suggests that the reference to building negotiations "anticipates Baal's rehabilitation and his readiness to consummate his *hieros gamos* and demonstrate his virility, which would have its counterpart in the fertility of flock and field."[1] This proposal is followed by the remarkable assertion that "there seems to be a reference to the _hieros gamos_ in the beginning of column III, where, however, there is a lacuna."[2]

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[1] "Es handelt sich . . . um religiöse Texte und Denkmäler, die aus dem Ugarit des 15./14. Jh. v. Chr. stammen, zunächst also lediglich ein ortlich und zeitlich begrenztes Bild geben konnen. Inwieweit sind Rückschlüsse auf die kanaanäische Religion anderer Orte und Zeiten zulässig?" (Fohrer, *ThLZ*, LXXVIII, 4, col. 194). See above, pp. 21-22.

[2] Julian Obermann contends, indeed, that "the story of how Baal planned to build a splendid house for himself, how he plotted to obtain consent to his plan from his father, the supreme god El, and how in the end he achieved his objective, appears to have formed a central theme--perhaps we should say *the* central theme--of the mythological folklore current among the Semites of Ugarit" (*Ugaritic Mythology: A Study of Its Leading Motifs* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958], p. 1).

[3] *LC*, p. 32. One may note here Gordon's caveat that "the texts tell us nothing of any annual death and revival of Baal" (*UL*, p. 4). He argues rather that "the recorded droughts and famines associated with Baal's misfortunes or hostility are calamities lasting seven years, plainly ruling out a yearly cycle of Baal's death and revival" (*ibid.*, p. 5).

The unseen presence of such a reference is apparently deduced from the "love-charm"[3] which Baal's messengers are directed to present to Anat, and more especially from the message with which he entrusts them. "The consequence of this _hieros gamos_ is, furthermore, anticipated by the message of Baal to his sister Anat in a passage which is a real _crux interpretum_ in the texts:"[4]

> "Effect unions in the land,
> Diffuse love in the earth;
> Pour out well-being into the midst of the earth,
> Increase love amidst the fields.
> Forbear to gainsay and grudge
> To me may thy feet run,
> To me may thine impulse hasten."[5]

These hints lead the author to propose further that Baal's house "may well have been the mythical prototype of the tabernacles or bivouacs which the Hebrews, doubtless following the peasants of Canaan, erected at this festival [Feast of Tabernacles]."[1] In spite of these speculations, Gray makes no attempt to identify the act of hieros gamos itself, although several passages in the Baal poems lend themselves to such an interpretation.[2]

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[1] _LC_, p. 36. "The building of the 'house' was probably the preliminary to the _hieros gamos_, though that is not explicit" (_Ibid._, p. 43).

[2] _Ibid._, p. 37. For the location in question, see _ANET_, p. 136b, and n. 6.

[3] _LC_, p. 37. Gordon (_UL_, p. 18, III:1) and Driver _CML_, p. 87, iii 19) both translate "corals," while Gaster's rendering does not even refer to Anat (_Thespis_, p. 238, IV).

[4] _LC_, p. 37.

[5] V AB iii 29-35 (ᶜnt:III:11-17). Here _LC_, pp. 37-38.

Against the probability of this implied hierogamy, it may be noted, first, that no support is forthcoming from other translators of Gray's so-called crux interpretum. Gordon, Ginsberg, Driver, and Gaster[3] all render the passage as an appeal to Anat to stop her blood-letting. Obermann's translation suggests rather an attempt to enlist the goddess' warlike talents in Baal's behalf.[4] This understanding certainly seems more compatible with the temper in which Anat responds to Baal's embassy.[5] At any rate, there is no evidence, in the course of Anat's visit with Baal, that she had come in response to an implied invitation to a Sacred Marriage.[6]

In the second place, Gray's suggestion that Baal's house may have been the "mythical prototype" of the sukkôt can hardly be taken seriously when one compares the structures in question. The palace is to be of monumental proportions, and fashioned by the divine artificer out of silver and gold,[1] while the Hebrew "booths" were surely modest in size and constructed out of unseasoned boughs for the purpose of temporary shelter.[2]

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[1] LC, p. 43.

[2] See below, pp. 168-74.

[3] UL, p. 19, 11-17; ANET, p. 136b, C 11-17; CML, p. 87a, 29-35; Thespis, p. 238-39.

[4] Ugaritic Mythology, p. 25, 13-16. See p. 38 for the author's interpretation of the passage.

[5] Cf. ANET, p. 137b, E 10 ff., for the violent mood in which Anat undertakes her mission to El in Baal's behalf.

[6] Ibid., ending of tablet D. Cf. Ugaritic Mythology, p. 42.

El and Asherah

One other supposed allusion to a Sacred Marriage celebration must be dealt with briefly before taking up the activities of the main protagonists. Prior to the passage in question, Baal and Anat have successfully sought Asherah's intervention with El in behalf of a house for Baal. Asherah proceeds ceremonially to the habitat of El, who greets her in the following fashion:

> As soon as El espies her
>   He _parts_ _his_ _jaws_ and laughs.
> His feet upon the footstool he puts
>   And doth twiddle his fingers.
> He lifts up his voice and [cri]es:
> "Why is come Lady Asher[ah of the S]ea?
>   Why hither the Progenitress of the G[ods]?
> Art thou become hungry and _fa[int]_,
>   Or art become thirsty and _pa[rched]_?
> Eat, pray, yea drink.
> Ea[t] thou from the tables bread;
>   Drink from the flagons wine,
>   From the golden gob(lets) blood of vines.
> See, El the King's love stirs thee,
>   Bull's affection arouses thee."[3]

Hooke interpreted this salutation to mean that El "invites Asherat to a banquet, and announces a sacred marriage between the Bull-El and the goddess."[1] Such an interpretation received subsequent support from F. F. Hvidberg and from Engnell.[2]

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[1] Cf. _ANET_, p. 134a, 113-20; p. 134b, 37-38.

[2] Cf. Lev. 23:39-43. See below, pp. 231-33.

[3] II AB iv-v 27-39 (51:IV:27-39). Here _ANET_, p. 133a.

All but one of the translators agree on the sexual character of El's greeting to Asherah,[3] but none of them supposes that it was intended to lead to a hierogamy. Marvin H. Pope comes closest to suggesting something of the sort: "It appears that El makes amorous overtures which Asherah ignores."[4] Driver, who interprets El as having lost his sexual potency,[5] takes his greeting to be sarcastic.[6] A. van Selms, who infers that "the period of sexual intercourse between the father god and the mother god was of the past,"[7] proposes that El "is still gallant enough to allude to their old love."[8]

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[1] *Origins . . .*, p. 33.

[2] "These words are obviously the invitation of the great god El of the Goddess to festal repast and divine nuptials" (*Graad og Latter i det Gamle Testamente: En Studie i kanaanaeisk-israelitisk Religion* [Copenhagen: B. Lunos bogtrykkeri, 1938], p. 30; trans. in *Studies*, p. 115). "The central point," says Engnell in agreement, "is a *réplique* of the *hieros gamos*, *viz*. between 'El and ᶜAṯirat" (*ibid.*).

[3] Gaster renders it: "Why, the love of El will take care of thee,/ the affection of the Bull-god protect thee!" (*Thespis*, p. 184).

[4] *El in the Ugaritic Texts*, "Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*," Vol. II (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955), p. 37. He comments later, however, that El "either makes amorous overtures or assures her of his affection" (*ibid.*, p. 45).

[5] *CML*, p. 23a.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 15a.

[7] *Marriage and Family Life in Ugaritic Literature* (London: Luzac & Company, Ltd., 1954), p. 65.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

It is important to note that neither of the alleged instances of hierogamy so far considered offers any description of the event itself. Here, in other words, one is asked to assume the existence not only of an accompanying ritual, but also of the mythical account to which it allegedly corresponded!

Baal and the heifer

In a third tablet from the cycle, however, there is a clear description of sexual activity on the part of Baal. Overcome by his adversary, Mot, he is forced to descend into the earth, but before he does so, the following scene takes place:

> He loved a heifer in (the land of) decease, a cow
> by the edge of the strand of death; he did lie
> with her seven and seventy (times),
> she was mounted (?) eight and eighty times,
> and she conceived and bare a boy.[1]

The enigmatic quality of this episode is strikingly underscored by the varied directions in which its meaning has been sought. It has been seen as an attempt to provide in advance for Baal's regeneration,[2] or to infuse him with additional strength against the trials of his descent into the underworld,[3] or to beget an heir "who will take his place if he does not come back."[1] Or perhaps the intent was that "by his last act he might ensure that fertility would not entirely perish from the earth."[2] Or again, "there may well have been a ritual mating behind the myth," by which the beginning of the breeding season was marked, "and the whole enterprise thus put under the aegis of Providence."[3]

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[1] I*AB v 18-22 (67:V:18-22). Here CML, p. 107b. Cf. ANET, p. 139a; UL, p. 42.

[2] "Baᶜal's life is regenerated by resurrection, but also by procreation before his descent into the underworld" (Johs. Pedersen, "Canaanite and Israelite Cultus," AcO, Vol. XVIII [1939], p. 6). So also Engnell, Studies, p. 119.

[3] "He is to copulate with a calf in the pastureland, the idea being --in accordance with a well-known primitive notion--that he may thereby

This latest proposal raises what is for this study the key question: namely, the identity of the heifer. It would seem perfectly in accord with "a rite of imitative magic"[4] to assume that she was simply a heifer. In that case, the presumed ritual counterpart to the myth[5] might be reflected in the Biblical condemnation of bestiality.[6]

The assumption is frequently made, nonetheless, that the heifer in some way represented the goddess Anat.[7] This equivalency is deduced from

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acquire bull-like strength to fortify him for the impending ordeal" (Thespis, p. 121).

[1] CML, p. 17b.

[2] Kapelrud, Discoveries, p. 47.

[3] LC, p. 51.

[4] Ibid., p. 50.

[5] "Possibly this text was a kind of muthos to a sacred rite of fertilising the herd by having sexual intercourse with the cows" (van Selms, Marriage . . . , p. 81). Gordon also speaks of this passage as "a myth, which, for all we know [underlining mine] may have been enacted ritually by reputable priests" (UL, p. 8). One can hardly fail to wonder at the demands made on the sexual vigor of the "reputable priests" by the repetitious nature of this particular liaison!

[6] Ex. 22:19; Lev. 18:23; 20:15-16; Deut. 27:21. Given the inherent possibilities of a pastoral economy, however, it is by no means necessary to assume that these are allusions to cultic practices.

[7] So Kapelrud, Discoveries . . . , p. 47. Engnell argues that the hieros gamos might be conceived of simultaneously in a variety of royal, divine, and animal formats (Studies, p. 103). In what form, then, is one to suppose that the goddess was represented in the ritual?

incidents in two tablets still to be considered, where there are references to the sexual congress of Baal and Anat amid a somewhat unclear series of bovine allusions.[1] As will shortly be seen, however, it is by no means agreed that these latter, extremely fragmentary tablets belong together, or that they are related to the main cycle of poems. Moreover, it must be noted anew that the supposition of a ritual action, corresponding to what the myth here describes, receives no support of any kind from the tablet itself.

Baal and Anath

The other two tablets which are of interest to this study are either placed by the translators at the end of the poems, or assigned a position entirely outside the cycle.[2] Ginsberg treats them as belonging originally to the same tablet;[1] although that view is disputed,[2] it will be followed here for convenience in considering the possible relationships among the relevant passages.

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[1] Kapelrud (Baal . . ., p. 69) and van Selms (Marriage . . ., pp. 81-82) both make this connection. Geo. Widengren does likewise, offering the incidents thus associated as occasions on which "der ugaritische Ba^{c}al feiert seine Hochzeit" (Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum [Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1955], p. 84, n. 50).

[2] Driver concludes the cycle with IV AB (76) and places RŠ 319 (132) as III among "several fragments which belong beyond doubt to the myth of Baal but which cannot be fitted into the story as it has so far been recovered" (CML, p. 19b). Gordon groups both tablets at the end, among "a few other texts [which] deal with the mating of Baal" (UL, p. 10). Ginsberg consigns them to an Appendix, with the observation that "it is distinct from the Baal epic which we have been following in the preceding pieces. RŠ 319, which is apparently the missing top right-hand corner of IV AB, contains a graphic account of sexual intercourse between Baal and Anath; and IV AB itself is suggestive of something more than platonic relations between the two. This is entirely at variance with the epic, as everyone will realize who has read the former without reading into it" (ANET, p. 142a).

[IV AB] The Maiden Anath lifts up her eyes,
  Lifts up her eyes and beholds,
Beholds a cow and proceeds a-walking,
  Proceeds a-walking and proceeds *a*-*dancing*,
  In the pleasant spots, in the lovely places.[3]

[RŠ 319] He seizes and holds [her] womb;
  [She] seizes and holds [his] stones.
Baal . . . *to* *an* *ox*.
[. . . the Mai]den Anath.
  [. . .] to conceive and bear.[4]

[IV AB] [Calve]s the cows dr[op]:
  An ox for Maiden Anath
  And a heifer for Yabamat Liimmim.
Quoth Puissant [Baal]:
" . . . that our progenitor is eternal,
  To all generations our begetter."
Baal scoops [his hands] full,
  [The God] Hadd [his] fin[gers] full.
. . . the mouth of Maiden An[ath],
  E'en the mouth of [his] fairest sister.
Baal goes up in the mou[ntain],
  Dagon's Son in the s[ky].
Baal sits upon [his th]rone,
  Dagon's Son upon [his se]at.
  (In lines 16-29, which are poorly preserved, there is
again talk of a buffalo being born to Baal, it being

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[1] It "is not certain but very probable" (*ANET*, pp. 141b-142a). Cf. previous note.

[2] Driver, on the authority of Virolleaud, contends that "the thickness of the tablet [RŠ 319] and the length of the lines" show that it cannot have been a piece of IV AB (*CML*, p. 20a).

[3] IV AB ii 26-30 (76:II:26-30). Here *ANET*, p. 142a. Cf. *UL*, p. 50; *CML*, p. 117b.

[4] RŠ 319 1-5 (132:1-5). Here *ANET*, p. 142a. Cf. *UL*, p. 53; *CML*, p. 121a-b.

still not absolutely clear that his bovine mother was
Anath herself.)
And so she goes up to Arar,
  Up to Arar and Zaphon.
In the pleasance, the Mount of Possession,
  She cries aloud to Baal:
"Receive, Baal, godly tidings,
  Yea receive, O Son of Dagon:
A wild-ox is [born] to Baal,
  A buffalo to Rider of Clouds."
Puissant Baal rejoices.[1]

Without the brief passage [RŠ 319] referring clearly to passionate intercourse between Baal and Anath, it would be possible to see the remainder [IV AB] as a second act of union between Baal and a cow.[2] Taken together, on the other hand, the foregoing sequence provides a striking instance of mythical hierogamy, followed by an enthronement.[3]

This mingling of divine, sexual, and royal motifs leads magnetically to the supposition of a ritual reënactment by a human king and queen, resulting in the birth of a royal heir.[4] Such a possibility further tempts interpreters to the suggestion that all of this may have taken place at an annual New Year Festival.[1] Thus, having warned his readers that "unfortunately we know little about the actual ceremonies performed in these rites," E. O. James nonetheless goes on to advise them that "the autumnal festival would seem to have followed its normal course."[2]

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[1] IV AB iii 1-37 (76:III:1-37). Here *ANET*, p. 142b. Cf. *UL*, p. 51; *CML*, pp. 117b-119a-b.

[2] Proceeding on this basis, Gray comments: "Our own opinion is that it relates to the birth of a sacred bull, which in the ritual of ancient Ugarit typified Baal in procreation" (*LC*, p. 69).

[3] Engnell asserts further that the marriage and enthronement "are so intimately bound up with each other that they can be considered as actually identical" (*Studies*, p. 124). Driver suggests that Baal "proves his right to the throne by taking a wife, as a king must do, albeit his own sister Anat, and begets offspring, though monstrous, so that his name will not be extinguished" (*CML*, p. 21b). Either of these interpretations would appear to be derived from principles exterior to the texts themselves. See below, p. 174, n. 1.

[4] "Just as Aliyan Ba^{c}l is the young bull, so his wife is the heifer. Aliyan Ba^{c}l's intercourse with the maiden ^{c}Anat, the heifer who gives birth to a young bull, is the subject of IV AB I-II. The birth of the

One can only ask, again, what possible support may be found in the Baal cycle for such an extrapolation. It can be shown from the texts that Baal copulated with a heifer and with Anat, and that these actions, which are certainly not obviously connected, produced issue. It cannot be shown that they were in any way related to fertility in general,[3] or

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young bull is proclaimed as joyful tidings. But we know that this relationship also aims at fecundity in mankind, and as the king is identical with Ba^{c}al, the queen becomes identical with the goddess ^{c}Anat. The offspring therefore becomes a prince of the royal house" (E. Hammershaimb, "The Immanuel Sign," *ST*, Vol. III, No. 2 [1949], p. 128).

[1] "Bei dem grossen agrarischen Neujahrsfest Kanaans feiert der junge Gott seinen hieros gamos" (Widengren, *SK*, p. 11). Kapelrud avers that "probably this text [RŠ 319 (132)] was once connected with the hieros gamos under the great year-festival, where the king probably played the role of Baal" (*Baal . . .*, pp. 67-68). The crucial utility of the word "probably" in the foregoing statement could hardly be overestimated!

[2] This included "renewal ceremonies . . . which reached their climax in a sacred marriage of the king and queen in their customary roles, having been enthroned" (*The Ancient Gods*, p. 147). Cf. also his *Cult . . .*, p. 74.

[3] "The progeniture is a necessary process of the bull-god; it creates not only progeny but it also furthers fertility for animals, grass and trees, yea, even for man" (Kapelrud, *Baal . . .*, p. 97). The truth is that Baal's mating with the heifer is immediately followed by his death, an event which provokes El to mourning over the fate of the people (I*AB v-vi, ANET, pp. 139a-b). Moreover, the texts imply that Baal's gifts of fertility are manifested specifically in the life-giving

to Baal's place within the Ugaritic pantheon,[1] or to any sort of festival.[2] It seems probable that some at least of these poems were recited, but there is no evidence available to us to demonstrate that they were enacted.[3] No historical or human references are to be found in the tablets, except with regard to those persons responsible for their copying. In short, if these myths had counterparts in a ritual pattern, the means are not presently available to determine what it was.[4]

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power of the rain (I*AB v 6-11, ANET, p. 139a; I AB iii-iv 5-9, *ibid.*, p. 140b; I AB iv 25-30, *ibid.*, p. 141a). Nowhere is there mention of his influence over the wombs, either of animals or of men. See above, pp. 90-91.

[1] Baal's sovereignty is clearly a derivative of his victories over Yamm (III AB A 7-11, ANET, p. 131a) and Mot (I AB vi 12-35, *ibid.*, p. 141a), and is symbolized by his successful campaign for a palace of his own (see above, p. 163, n. 2).

[2] "The practice of temple prostitution was also closely linked with the fertility god. It had its natural place in the cult at the great annual festival, when Baal's enthronement was celebrated and fertility was ensured for the year ahead. It was then that the 'sacred marriage' took place and the worshippers gave themselves up to drunkenness and sexual orgies in the most licentious part of the festival" (Kapelrud, *Discoveries . . .*, p. 52). Is it merely an oversight that no texts are cited in support of this remarkable reconstruction? In addition to the reader's inability to identify this "annual festival" in the Baal cycle, it may be mentioned that hierodules are nowhere named in the Ugaritic documents (see below, p. 178, n. 3).

[3] See above, pp. 159-62.

[4] "One might even admit *a priori* the possibility of 'dramatic performances' at regular intervals. But the question still remains: what role did the cycle of texts AB play in it? The only answer yielded by the examination and analysis of the texts under discussion is: a myth with epic aspects. All the rest dissolves into hypothesis" (De Langhe, *MRAK*, p. 141).

Shachar and Shalim

In the case of the next tablet to be considered, the presence of rubrical passages has already been discussed.[1] It is by no means certain that the mythological portion was presented in dramatic form, however.[2] This uncertainty should be kept in mind while evaluating the very widespread identification of this text as a hieros gámos.[3]

The opening lines of the myth appear to be a thoroughly bawdy seduction or wooing scene. Two women, who are the objects of El's intentions, jest at his inability to maintain erection.[1] His ultimate success is set forth in the following passages:

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[1] See above, pp. 159-60.

[2] Gaster, for example, says of the two parts that "the first gives the 'book of words' for a seasonal ceremony. The second is purely mythological" (Thespis, p. 87). Though he speaks of it later as a "dramatic myth" (ibid., p. 410), his marginal notes do not make clear whether he believes it to have been enacted or merely recited. Gordon says it "was doubtless acted out" ("Canaanite Mythology," MAW, p. 190), but again it is not certain that he intends this to refer to the mythological portion. James Montgomery offers the interesting and plausible hypothesis that "the spectacle was doubtless mimic on part of the actors, independent voices, with musical variation, presenting the story" ("Ras Shamra Notes. VII. The Ugaritic Fantasia of the Gracious and Beautiful Gods," JAOS, Vol. LXII, No. 1 [1942], p. 51).

[3] Hooke, Origins . . ., p. 41; Engnell, Studies, p. 131; Kapelrud, Baal . . ., p. 71; Widengren, SK, pp. 11, 84, n. 50; Pope, El . . ., p. 81; Driver, CML, p. 23a; James, Cult . . ., pp. 74-75. Gaster wrote in an earlier study that "apart from the unmistakable indications in our present Ugaritic text [SS], there is no certain evidence of the 'sacred marriage' at an early date on Syro-Palestinian soil" ("A Canaanite Ritual Drama: The Spring Festival at Ugarit," JAOS, Vol. LXVI, No. 1 [1946], p. 73). More recently, he has been willing to propose only that it "may well ascend to the familiar seasonal rites of the 'sacred marriage,'" (Thespis, p. 413; see above, p. 161). Among those who reject the identification is De Langhe, who argues that the text "se dérobe presque entièrement . . . à tout essai d'explication" (Proceedings, p. 99).

> He stoops,
> he kisses their lips;
> lo! their lips are sweet, sweet as pomegranates.
> By kissing and conceiving, by embraces [and]
> yearning they travail [and]
> bear Shachar and Shalim. The tale is brought
> to El (saying): '[My two] wives,
> El, have borne (children). What have they
> borne? Two have been born, Shachar and Shalim.'
> Take up (and) prepare (offerings) for dame
> Shapash and for the fixed stars.
> He stoops, he kisses their lips; lo! their lips are
> sweet.
> By kissing and conceiving, [by] embraces and
> yearning--it shall again
> be recited (up) to five (times) by the troupe [and
> by] the leaders(?) of the assembly--both
> of them travail and bear (children); they bear
> gracious gods, twin figures
> born in one day, sucking the teats of the
> breasts of the [two].[2]

This text is "without any trace of the Baal cult,"[3] and is marked by a number of features which distinguish it from hierogamies previously treated in this study. It is not certain, to begin with, whether El's female partners are human or divine.[4] In either case, it is striking that there are two of them, a fact which seems regularly to have been overlooked or ignored. How else can one account for assertions that it is "le roi divinisé who here performs the rite with the high priestess,"[1] or that "this is a _hieros gamos_ or sacred marriage, similar to that of Marduk with a human woman at Babylon."[2] Moreover, the double mating is repeated, producing at least four divine offspring. While this occasions no awkwardness at the level of myth, it is difficult to see how it might have been represented in any realistic ritual.[3]

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[1] SS E 30-R. ii 15 (52:29-48). CML, p. 123a-b; UL, pp. 59-60.

[2] SS R. ii 15-27 (52:49-61). Here CML, p. 123b; cf. UL, pp. 60-61.

[3] Gordon, MAW, p. 191. Kapelrud suggests that "the text must then have originated in a period when Il played the principal role in the fertility cult, that is: in a time when he was not replaced by Baal" (Baal . . . , p. 71)

[4] Driver, whose translation is reproduced here, assumes that it is their human husband who brings the news of the divine offspring (CML, p. 22b). Gaster suggests that the man has been made a cuckold (Thespis, p. 431), while admitting that by an equally possible alternative

Given the assumptions of "patternism," the most obvious solution would be to postulate some form of mass mating.[4] So indeed Hooke suggested that "_the Birth of the Beautiful and Gracious Gods_ is the celebration in the temple of a sacred marriage between the priests of El and the temple hierodules."[5] Such a proposal also opens the door to popular

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translation, he would disappear from the text entirely (_ibid._, p. 432). Gordon's rendering adopts this alternative (_UL_, p. 61), taking the women to be El's own wives (_ibid._, p. 58). Pope suggests that they are probably "none other than Asherah and ^{c}Anat" (_El . . ._, p. 36).

[1] Engnell, _Studies_, p. 131, here quoting Dussaud with approval. Even one high priestess would have to be supplied for the purposes of this interpretation, since no such dignitary appears anywhere in the extant Ugaritic materials.

[2] Driver, _CML_, p. 23a. It has been noted above (pp. 56-57) that the evidence for Marduk's celebration of the Sacred Marriage is sketchy at best; it certainly provides no parallels to El's activities here. If the reference is the the account by Herodotus (see above, p. 82, n. 1), it is equally difficult to see what it contains which is "similar."

[3] See above, p. 169, n. 5.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 7-8.

[5] _Origins . . ._, p. 41. Engnell observes that "the divine marital union is of a rather 'democratized' character, in being consummated doubtless by a number of priests and priestesses" (_Studies_, p. 131).

participation in the orgy, since it is assumed that "der junge Gott . . . von den Festteilnehmern offenbar nachgeahmt wird."[1]

No part of the foregoing is inconceivable, but there is scarcely a shred of evidence to support it. El may have had a temple in Ugarit, but none has thus far been discovered.[2] No word for "hierodules" appears anywhere in the Ugaritic documents.[3] With regard to "sympathetic license on the part of the worshippers," it has been noted that there is "no evidence for this in the Ras Shamra texts."[4] Finally, it may well be mentioned again that the present tablet offers some of the more plausible evidence for Gordon's contention that fertility rites in Ugarit were founded on septennial rather than annual cycles.[5]

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[1] Widengren, SK, p. 11. Also apparently accepted by Fohrer, ThLZ, LXXVIII, 4, col. 196.

[2] "It is noteworthy that the two temples which have the best and most commanding situation are dedicated to Dagan and Baal . . . It will be of the utmost interest if, in future excavations at Ras Shamra, other large temples are discovered, dedicated perhaps to El, the ancient supreme god of Ugarit" (Kapelrud, Discoveries . . ., pp. 9-10). It should be mentioned that there is a reference to a "House of 'Il" in a sacrificial text (14, UL, p. 109).

[3] "This does not mean, of course, that sacral prostitution did not occur in Ugarit, but only that it is not mentioned in our texts" (van Selms, Marriage . . ., p. 80).

[4] Gray, LC, p. 148.

[5] SS O i 14-15, R. ii 31-36 (52:14-15, 67-70). CML, pp. 121b, 125a-b; UL, pp. 59, 61-62. See above, p. 163, n. 3, and MAW, p. 187.

The Wedding of Nikkal

"Nikkal and the Kathirat"[1] appears to be a hymeneal in honor of the god and goddess of the moon.[2] It opens with the prediction that a child will be born,[3] after which Yarikh announces, apparently through an intermediary, the bride-price he is prepared to offer.[4] Other possible brides are suggested and refused,[5] and the betrothal gift is weighed out in the presence of the bride's family.[6] The poem closes with a passage, set off from the rest by a scribal line, which seems to concern the preparation of the bride's dowry and trousseau.[7]

As the foregoing summary indicates, there is much in this text which seems likely to have reflected Ugaritic betrothal practices.[8] It is at least additionally possible, as indeed several interpreters hold, that the mythical elements in the composition were intended to sanctify an ordinary human marriage.[1]

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[1] So Driver, CML, pp. 125-27. Gordon entitles the poem "The Wedding of Nikkal and the Moon" (UL, pp. 63-65).

[2] Nikkal is "from Nin-gal, a Sumerian lunar goddess" (UL, p. 63, n. 1). So also CML, p. 125a, n. 4. Yarikh, her bridegroom, is the "West-Semitic moon-god" (ibid., n. 6). The former is mentioned in the offering text 3:26, and the latter in 1:14 (UL, pp. 113, 112. Cf. Gordon, Ugaritic Manual, "Analecta Orientalia," Vol. XXXV, No. 2 [Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1955], pp. 130, 129).

[3] NK i 1-15 (77:1-15).

[4] NK i 16-23 (77:16-24).

[5] NK i 24-ii 2 (77:25-31).

[6] NK ii 2-11 (77:32-39).

[7] NK ii 12-22 (77:40-50).

[8] Gray calls it "a very full and interesting description of the process of marriage in ancient Canaan" (LC, p. 180). Cf. van Selms, Marriage . . ., passim.

In any case, the conjugal act itself is not described. This led Engnell to refer to the poem as "an introductory scene to one of those hieros gamos pieces so often met with in the Ras Shamra texts."[2] In a similar fashion, Dussaud averred that it "paraît être une récitation prononcée à l'occasion d'une cérémonie qui mettait en jeu un hiéros gamos."[3]

There are some suggestive hints, from a hierogamic standpoint, in the fragmentary and disputed opening passage. A comparison of two translations will show the possibilities and difficulties:

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[1] "The story of a divine marriage is incorporated in the hope that, as that marriage is annually blessed with the fruits of the earth, so the human marriage may be blessed with the fruit of the woman's womb" (Driver, CML, p. 24b). "The occasion of the present poem is a purely secular marriage. It is addressed to the Košaroth because these goddesses, like the Greek Charites, were patronesses of all domestic bliss" (Gaster, "On a Proto-Hebrew Poem from Ras Shamra," JBL, Vol. LVII, No. 1 [1938], p. 82). "It may have led up to a nuptial ceremony based on the precedent of the sacred marriage of the divine prototypes, the new moon being propitious at childbirth" (James, The Nature and Function of Priesthood: A Comparative and Anthropological Study [London: Thames and Hudson, 1955], p. 87).

[2] "For we are not justified in calling our text a direct hierogamy text, as its subject is far more the wooing and the buying of the bride, which precedes the sacred connumbium itself" (Studies, p. 133). Nowhere else, however, is this buying of the bride encountered in hierogamic texts treated in this study.

[3] "Mais, si nous ne nous trompons pas, il s'y joint la préoccupation d'assurer le cours de la vie en maintenant l'éclat de la lune" (Les découvertes de Ras Shamra (Ugarit) et l'Ancien Testament [2nd ed. rev.; Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1941], p. 141). He added, subsequently, that "la récitation de ce poème devait s'effectuer au cours de la fête" (Les religions des Hittites et des Hourrites, des Phéniciens et des Syriens, "Mana," Vol. I, Part 2 [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1945], p. 380).

(Gordon) I sing of Nikkal-and-Ib [ ]
Hrhb, King of Summer
Hrhb, *Estival* King
When the Sun sets
The Moon *rises*
--[ ]
A virg[in] will give birth [
[To the K]trt
Daughters of *shouting*
[Swallows].
Lo a maid will bear a s[on]
answers/sees *lo* for his love she is [ ]
[ ] for her flesh, my blood [ ][1]

(Driver) I sing of Nikkal-and-Eb [daughter]
of Hiribhi king of summer, Hiribhi king
of the raiding season. At the setting of the sun
Yarikh relaxes, embraces [her] who
shall bear a son to him. [Hear, pray, O]
Kathirat, O shining daughters of the crescent moon!
"Lo! a lass shall bear a son [to a man].
Look! lo! do you get sustenance for his use
[and do you]
furnish(?) blood for his flesh, that [he may
grow up and] live."[2]

The announcement of the forthcoming birth is certainly reminiscent of Biblical annunciations, as has been noted by a number of commentators.[3] It is quite sufficient, as will be seen, to cause some interpreters to propose a *hieros gamos*.[4] Such an understanding would be ruled out, however, were one to accept Albrecht Goetze's rendering of the foregoing passage:

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[1] 77:1-9 (*UL*, pp. 63-64).

[2] NK i 1-9 (*CML*, p. 125a).

[3] Driver alludes to Is. 7:14 (*CML*, p. 125b, n. 8). Gordon comments that "such annunciations are common in Ugaritic and biblical literature," citing Gen. 16:11 as the earliest (*UL*, p. 64, n. 1).

[4] So Widengren, *SK*, p. 11 and n. 50, p. 84. Gordon likewise has written that "the wedding is to result in fertility symbolized as the child that the bride will bear to the groom. . . . Our text is therefore a *hieros gamos*: a wedding of the gods, whose fertility brings on terrestrial abundance for mankind" (*MAW*, pp. 214-15). That either the birth of the child or the subsequent divine sexual activity will avail to

> Let me praise Nikkal and exalt Hirihbi,
>   the king of summer; Hirihbi, the
>   king of ravaging(?)!
> At sunset Yarah went on (??),
>   he made love to her so that
>   she finally bore him a son.
> Listen O Kātirāt,
>   daughters of Hilal, swallows!
> Surely the girl gave birth to a son;
> She passionately longed for his love,
>   so that she might give herself
>   up to his flesh.[1]

"The situation, then," says Goetze, "is this: Yarah had seduced Nikkal."[2] Comparison with the foregoing translations will show some support in each for Goetze's reconstruction. The present writer is not competent to adjudicate the question, to which still other solutions have been proposed.[3] In any case, it is clear that the text as read from the existing tablet hardly provides a solid basis for any of the competing interpretations.

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effect earthly fecundity is a notion which cannot be derived from the text itself.

[1] "The Nikkal Poem from Ras Shamra," *JBL*, Vol. LX, No. 4 (1941), pp. 373-74.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

[3] Gaster offers his own variation in support of the contention that "the blessing of children [which may ensue from the union] . . . indeed is the substance of the opening Prologue" (*JBL*, LVII, 1, p. 83). Van Selms apologizes that "the very damaged state of the beginning of this tablet makes it impossible for us to translate the passage" (*Marriage*, p. 87). He postulates elsewhere, however, that "Yrh's wooing Nikkal is also preceded by what seems to be an oracle, promising a son to the Moon god" (*ibid.*, p. 15).

The poem at hand certainly refers to a divine wedding. There is no indication, however, as to the way in which such an account might have been employed at the ritual or ceremonial level. The likelihood of its having been publicly declaimed may be deduced from its language and style, but no such grounds exist for the assumption that it must also have been enacted.[1]

The Legend of King Keret

In the tablets recounting the activities of a certain King Krt, the above situation is almost exactly reversed. For although a variety of conflicting analyses have been advanced,[2] the current scholarly consensus supports a quasi-historical understanding.[3]

In briefest outline, the relevant portions of the legend tell of a king whose wife and family are inexplicably wiped out.[4] Desolate over the threatened extinction of his line, he prays to El, in a dream, for further progeny.[1] El directs him to mount a military expedition against King Pabel of Udum, and to demand the latter's daughter as a wife.[2] Keret proceeds to carry out the oracle, stopping enroute to vow an offering at the shrine of Asherah:

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[1] It is worth noting here that in the Mesopotamian mythical texts there are also hierogamic passages for which no evidence of ritual representation exists (see above, pp. 71-73).

[2] René Follet distinguishes among five types: "historique," "mythologique," "cultuelle," "mythologico-cultuelle," and "justificative" ("Le poème de Krt mythe social?," *Biblica*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3 [1956], pp. 341-42).

[3] Gray writes: "The majority of scholars, therefore, are agreed that the Krt text is distinct from the other literary texts of Ras Shamra, which are myths rather than sagas, and the main impression given by the first Krt tablet is that here were are more in touch with sober history" (*The Krt Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra: A Social Myth of Ancient Canaan* ["Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui," Vol. V; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955], p. 2). Ginsberg comments: "That it contains a certain core of history is probable" (*ANET*, p. 142b).

[4] KRT A i 1-25 (*ANET*, p. 143a).

> As Asherah of Tyre exists,
>   As Elath of Sidon!
> If Ḥurriya to my house I take,
>   Bring the lass into my court,
> Her double I'll give in silver,
>   And her treble in gold.[3]

King Pabel's attempts to buy peace without surrendering his daughter are rejected,[4] and Keret presents his ultimatum:

> Give me Lady Hurriya (*ḥry*),
>   The fair, thy first-begotten;
> Whose fairness is like Anath's fairness,
>   [Whose] beau[ty] like Ashtoreth's beauty;
> Whose eyeballs are the pureness of lapis,
>   Whose pup[ils] the gleam of *jet*;
> Whom in my dream El bestowed,
>   In my vision the Father of Man.
> And let her bear offspring to Keret,
>   And a lad to the Servant of El.[5]

At the subsequent wedding banquet, El toasts Keret's wife to the bearing of many sons and daughters, and this blessing is shortly fulfilled.[6]

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[1] KRT A ii 57-58 *ANET*, p. 143b). So also *CML*, p. 29a, ii 4-5.

[2] KRT A ii-iii 59-155 (*ANET*, pp. 143b-144a-b).

[3] KRT A iv 201-206 (*ibid.*, p. 145a).

[4] KRT A vi 269-280 (*ibid.*, p. 145b).

[5] KRT A vi 289-299 (*ibid.*, p. 145b, 144a-b).

[6] KRT B ii 11-iii 21 (*ibid.*, p. 146a).

To the extent that these events represent historical deposits, they therefore refer to actions at the human level. Were these in fact ritual actions, for which mythical correspondences were presupposed? Engnell so contended, seeing in the military expedition "a cultic 'exodus' to a festival."[1] The scene at the shrine of Asherah is said to describe how "the king delivers the wedding-gift to the goddess for the *hieros gamos*,[2] and the courting of Hurriya "might thus be called a ritual of the wooing by the divine king of the queen-goddess."[3]

Engnell would seem to have seriously misunderstood the scene at the shrine; it is Keret's failure to make good his promised votive offering which provides the mythical rationale for his subsequent misfortunes.[4] Anath is therefore hardly to be equated with Hurriya, whose human beauty is simply extolled by comparison with that of the goddesses.

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[1] *Studies*, p. 156.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 149. Engnell's modest disclaimer should also be recorded: "Of course I do not for a moment pretend to have solved the frequent riddles of the Krt text. I only want to suggest an hypothetical unity conception along the lines of divine kingship, worthy, I hope, of being tested" (*ibid.*, n. 3). S. Mowinckel sees the proto-history of the text as hierogamic: "The motif of the epic is derived from the 'sacred marriage,' which was one of the chief features of the Canaanite cult drama" (*He That Cometh*, trans. G. W. Anderson [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956], p. 53). Aage Bentzen is likewise reluctant to give up the cultic interpretation entirely: "The KRT-Texts either seem to belong to a special wedding-rite of the king, or the wedding of the king is regarded as part of the enthronement festival and the *hieros gamos* rites. . . . However that may be, the KRT-Texts are at all events not 'historical' in the narrow sense of the word. They are in some way or another connected with a ritual" (*King and Messiah* [London: Lutterworth Press, 1955], p. 30).

[4] KRT B iii 25-30 (*ANET*, p. 146a-b).

The military details of Keret's expedition against Pabel are by no means clear, but only the prejudice that its destination is a *hieros gamos* provides any justification for interpreting it as a festival procession. Finally, the most striking allusion to Keret's "divine" nature occurs at precisely the point in the story where his mortality has become apparent,[1] and the tablet concludes with the young heir's frustrated attempt to replace the failing monarch.[2]

The explication of the text finally centers, therefore, on the reason for Keret's action. Here the cultic treatment has largely given way to the view that the text concerns a mythicized dynastic founder, whose historical lineaments have been overlaid with heroic and legendary veils.[3] It is the continuation of a particular royal line, and not fecundity in general, which is the goal of Keret's union. Moreover, the sexual act itself is not even mentioned, which "makes it extremely improbable that there is any connection with a seasonal *hieros gamos*."[1]

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[1] KRT C i-ii 11-23 (*ANET*, p. 147a).

[2] KRT C vi 39-59 (*ANET*, p. 149a).

[3] "Il s'agit selon nous de souvenirs historiques (vraisemblablement) ou même pseudo-historiques, se rapportant à la fondation d'une dynastie. Cette matière, élaborée en légende épique, est attribuée à un héros, plus ou moins véritable, et mise en oeuvre par un procédé de groupement d'épisodes et de chants. On aboutit ainsi à créer une sorte de Geste de Keret" (Follet, *Biblica*, XXXVII, 3, p. 347). "As the poem now stands it is not a ritual text, but a poetic epic about Karit, a legendary king and the founder of a dynasty, who appears as a demigod, but is at the same time, in relation to the gods, a human being" (Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, p. 52). Cf. also de Langhe, *La Nouvelle Clio*, V, 1-4, p. 192; Gaster, "The Canaanite Epic of Keret," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, N.S. Vol. XXXVII, No. 3 (1947), p. 286; de Vaux, "Textes de Râs Shāmrā," *Revue Biblique*, Vol. LV, No. 1 (1948), pp. 146-47; Gordon, *UL*, p. 66. Gray suggests that it may preserve "a reminiscence of the symbiosis of Semite and Hurrian in North Syria" (*Krt Text . . .*, p. 2).

The Tale of Aqhat

A similar yearning for progeny to continue his line, on the part of a hero named Daniel, marks the opening portion of the final text to be considered. The story seems, however, "to have less of a historical core than that of Keret."[2] It begins as follows:

> [. . . Straightway Daniel the Raph]a-man,
>   Forthwith [Ghazir the Harnamiyy-man],
> Gives oblation to the gods to eat,
>   Gives oblation to drink to the holy ones.
> *A couch of sackcloth* he mounts and lies,
>   *A couch of* [loincloth] and [passes the night].[3]

The point of this activity, which continued thereafter to the seventh day, seems to have been thoroughly missed by Engnell. He wrote that it "describes unmistakably a repeated divine royal connubium."[4] What it rather describes is an act of ritual incubation, in which Daniel seeks divine assurance that a son will be born to him.[5] The result is that Baal presents Daniel's plight to El, describing him as one "Who hath no son like his brethren,/No scion like his kindred."[1] El responds with a favorable oracle:

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[1] Gray, *Krt Text . . .*, p. 5.

[2] Ginsberg, *ANET*, p. 149b. Mowinckel calls Daniel "a figure of the same type as Karit" (*He That Cometh*, p. 546), but it is by no means so clear to this reader that a royal personage is intended here. See Gray's comment, above, on p. 183, n. 3.

[3] AQHT A i 1-6 (*ANET*, pp. 149b-150a).

[4] *Studies*, p. 135.

[5] Cf. Gray, *LC*, p. 75; Julian Obermann, *How Daniel Was Blessed With A Son: An Incubation Scene in Ugaritic*, "Supplement to *JAOS*," No. 6 (Baltimore: The American Oriental Society, 1946), *passim*.

> Let him mount his bed [. . .],
> In the kissing of his wife [she'll conceive],
> In her embracing become pregnant.
> [By conception] (and) pregnancy she'll bear
> [A man-child to Daniel the Ra]pha-[man].[2]

This passage moved Engnell to comment: "Here again we thus have the king in the hierogamy."[3] It is hard to know how to treat such a contention seriously. That Daniel was a king is at most only inferential,[4] and beyond that none of the usual hierogamic marks are present. There is no hint whatsoever that Daniel represented Baal, El, or any other deity in his union with his wife. The latter could hardly be identified with Anath, who in the subsequent portions of the story is responsible for the murder of Aqhat, the longed-for offspring of this union! There is no reference whatsoever to fertility.[5] The context and purpose of this union suggests nothing more than a man's need of a son "to tend him in old age, to perform the proper rites after his death and maintain the worship of the ancestors of the family."[1]

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[1] AQHT A i 20 (ANET, p. 150a).

[2] AQHT A i 40-43 (ibid., p. 150a-b).

[3] Studies, p. 137. Cf. also James, Priesthood . . ., p. 137; Hammershaimb, ST, III, 2, p. 127.

[4] Hammershaimb, ibid.

[5] Obermann suggests a relationship with certain Biblical narratives, "in which virility of an aged husband is restored, infertility of a barren wife is cured, by divine intervention" (How Daniel . . ., p. 28a). Even this possibility seems to be rejected by Ginsberg (ANET, p. 150a, n. 9).

The news that his plea will be heeded prompts Daniel to stage a week-long celebration, attended by a group of young women.[2] Upon their departure they express themselves in a way, says Engnell, "that must, as far as I can see, point to another performance of the *hieros gamos* rite."[3] The lines in question are fragmentary and obscure; all that is certain is that they refer approvingly to a bed.[4] This hardly justifies the assumption that Daniel participated in ritual copulation with his guests. The couplet more likely belongs with the following passage, which suggests the period of gestation leading to the birth of Aqhat.[5]

Finally, it should be mentioned that whereas the central figure in this tale was originally thought to be Daniel, it is now realized that the tablets were dedicated to Aqhat.[6] It seems likely, in fact, that the latter may have been a death-and-resurrection figure, though proof of this awaits the discovery of the missing final tablet.[7]

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[1] Driver, *CML*, p. 8a. Cf. AQHT A i 22-34 (*ANET*, p. 150a).

[2] AQHT A ii 24-41 (*ANET*, pp. 150b-151a). For a suggestion as to the identity of these "Kathirat," see above, p. 180, n. 1.

[3] *Studies*, p. 137.

[4] AQHT A (II) ii 42-43 (*ANET*, p. 151a). Cf. *UL*, p. 88; *CML*, p. 51b, 41-42.

[5] AQHT A ii 43ff. (*ANET*, p. 151a). So Gaster (*Thespis*, p. 340).

[6] Cf. Ginsberg, *ANET*, p. 149b; Obermann, *How Daniel . . .*, p. 28b.

[7] Cf. *ANET*, p. 155b; *CML*, p. 8b; *Thespis*, p. 320.

Ugarit and the Fertile Crescent

In view of the "cultural internationalism" of the 15th-13th centuries B.C.,[1] and the composite nature of Ugaritic literature,[2] one might readily suppose that Mesopotamian religious patterns would have made their way extensively into Syro-Palestine.[3] What must also be noted, however, is the success with which Canaanite culture maintained its identity throughout this period.[4] This success was likewise embodied, at Ugarit, in the development of an indigenous and independent literature.[5]

The editor of the original "Myth and Ritual" essays did indeed deduce that the "Pattern" had spread outward primarily from Mesopotamia.[6]

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[1] Cf. Albright, FSAC, pp. 209-12 for this term and a rich sampling of literary evidence to justify it.

[2] Gordon characterizes it as "a Syrian port with Mediterranean trade, a Semitic area under Hittite overlordship, a Canaanite population within the cuneiform world" (UL, p. 123).

[3] Thus Snaith: "We must look to North Syria rather than to Mesopotamia for early Mesopotamian influence on Palestinian cults, and directly to Mesopotamia only from the seventh century onwards" (The Jewish New Year Festival, p. 209).

[4] Cf. Graham and May, Culture and Conscience, pp. 310-11; Fohrer, ThLZ, LXXVIII, 4, col. 196.

[5] "In spite of the political influence of Egypt and the cultural influence of Mesopotamia, a native literature grew and flourished in a dialect which has comparatively little affinity with Accadian" ("Canaanite Kingship in Theory and Practice," VT, Vol. II [1952], pp. 199-200). According to a study by Jean Nougayrol, all of the documents concerning "la religion locale" are in Ugaritic, whereas law, international affairs, and scholarship are the proper domain of Babylonian writing ("L'influence babylonienne à Ugarit d'après les textes en cunéiformes classiques," Syria, Vol. XXXIX [1962], pp. 28-29).

[6] See above, pp. 16-17.

The same hypothesis was subsequently espoused by a group of Scandinavian scholars, among whom Widengren asserted that "the Ras Shamra texts have been of paramount importance as a connecting link between Mesopotamian and Hebrew civilizations."[1]

To what extent, it may now be asked, is such a statement supported by evidences of the Sacred Marriage at Ras Shamra? What relationships between Mesopotamia and Ugarit have been revealed, such as will have a bearing on the materials from Hebrew Palestine to be considered in the final chapter?

In answer, it may first be recalled that the Sumerian hierogamic texts were of three types: (1) poems in which Dumuzi courts Inanna, (2) compositions relating the marriage ritual to the prosperity of king and people, and (3) love songs recited by Inanna (or a priestess) to Dumuzi (or the king).[2] If literary equivalents to any of these forms existed at Ugarit, they are yet to be uncovered.

At the level of ritual, there is at least some evidence that in Sumer the roles of god and goddess were reënacted by king and priestess, in a ceremony which was expressly linked with agricultural fertility and the ruler's destiny.[3] No single Ugaritic text offers even so much as half of this myth/ritual complement. Baal engages in hierogamic activity, and is spoken of as a king, but there is no trace whatsoever of human counterparts in the Baal-Anat cycle. Nor is there any textual link between Baal's various copulations, on the one hand, and his fertility functions or his royal sovereignty on the other.[1] Keret and Daniel may both be at least semi-historical royal personages, and do achieve fruitful sexual union with their wives. Yet there is no suggestion in the texts that they thereby ritually represent the union of Baal and Anath, or of any other couple in the Ugaritic pantheon.[2]

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[1] "The Myth and Ritual Pattern In Ancient Civilization (with Special Regard to Indo-Iranian and Near-Eastern Culture Areas)," Proceedings, p. 103. He finds the whole pattern present, including the point at which the "*hieros gamos* is celebrated as the concluding symbol of the victory of life over death, when the young god is enthroned in the divine assembly" (*ibid.*).

[2] See above, p. 42.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.

In short, if one might suppose that the Baal myth were recited on the occasion of Daniel's impregnation of his wife, or that the Nikkal poem provided the mythical background for the celebration of Keret's wedding, a Sacred Marriage pattern might be traced in the Ugaritic materials. The real justification for such a procedure, however, is the modern interpreter's desire to elicit from the texts the evidence required to support his predetermined conclusions.[3] With regard to the *hieros gamos*, then, the present writer fails to discern any significant similarity between the Sumerian materials and those of Ras Shamra.

Apart from such comparative analysis, what may be said of the evidence for a Sacred Marriage of any sort at all at Ugarit? Following the definition adopted for this study,[1] three occurrences of divine union may be identified: the copulation of Baal with the heifer and with Anat,[2] the intercourse of El with his two wives(?),[3] and the wedding of Nikkal.[4] The only common element is the successful begetting of offspring (predicted in the case of Nikkal). In no case is the offspring identified as royal, or associated with human, animal, or agricultural fertility. Only the text recounting El's amorous activity seems clearly to have been employed within the context of ritual celebration. Even in that case, the present evidence warrants no more than the assertion that the mythical portion was probably chanted and possibly mimed.

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[1] See above, pp. 172-74.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 185-87,188-89.

[3] Cf. Johann Jakob Stamm, "Die Immanuel-Weissagung: Ein Gespräch mit E. Hammershaimb," *VT*, Vol. IV (1954), p. 27.

In summary, while divine unions certainly figure in the Ugaritic texts, there is presently no real justification for assuming that these mythical actions had ritual correspondents. In that sense, this study has not found the *hieros gamos* at Ras Shamra.

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[1] See above, p. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 168-70, 171-72.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 175-78.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 179-83.

CHAPTER V

HEBREW PALESTINE IN THE BIBLICAL ERA

Issues and Methods

The religious forms of the culture areas so far considered have survived largely as the subject of scholarly curiosity. Hebrew Palestine, by contrast, was the birthplace of the living religions whose presuppositions still largely permeate the civilization of the West. Consequently the existing body of commentary is both oceanic in its physical dimensions, and under the constraints of living theological interests.[1]

The present study claims no competence to deal with matters of textual criticism, nor has a verse-by-verse exegesis been attempted. The question posed is a limited one: Do the Biblical documents offer convincing evidences of the celebration of a *hieros gamos* as a part of the religious practices of the ancient Hebrews? In general, it has been deemed sufficient to examine the texts put forward by those who espouse an affirmative answer to this question.

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[1] With regard to Canticles, for example, A.-M. Dubarle speaks of "les principales questions générales de méthode posées par ce petit livre, specialement aux exégètes catholiques. Ceux-ci (et dans une mesure variable, tous les exégètes croyants) ont à satisfaire non seulement aux règles ordinaires de l'interprétation des textes anciens, mais encore aux exigences d'une doctrine, d'après laquelle les écrits bibliques sont la parole de Dieu et ne peuvent avoir un contenu erroné ou immoral" ("L'amour humain dans le Cantique des Cantiques," *Revue Biblique*, Vol. LXI, No. 1 [1954], p. 67). See below, p. 238, n. 3.

The influence of neighboring cults

Evidence that the ancient Hebrews borrowed religious patterns from contemporary Near Eastern cultures is supplied by the Biblical writers themselves.[1] Archeological discoveries in this century at such strategically located sites as Mari and Ugarit have seemed to provide the "bridge" over which such cultural commerce travelled.[2]

With regard to the *hieros gamos*, therefore, it seems worth reiterating that the single relevant text amid the thousands thus far uncovered at Mari is quite fragmentary and relatively uninformative.[3] Moreover, as concluded above,[4] this writer finds no essential similarity between the hierogamic elements in the Ugaritic poems and the Sacred Marriage texts from Mesopotamia. As for the general relevance of the Ras Shamra tablets to the Biblical accounts, the claims of earlier investigators have been considerably reduced by subsequent students.[5]

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[1] "It is certain from many allusions in the Prophets and the Books of Kings that there was constant percolation of different non-Yahwistic cults" (Albright, *FSAC*, p. 311). Cf. II Kgs. 23:11; Jer. 7:18; Ez. 8:14.

[2] The Mari texts, says Schmökel, "zeigen ganz allgemein die Brücke auf, über die altmesopotamische Religionsäusserungen nach dem westlichen Syrien und damit ins kanaanäische Palästina gelangt sind" ("Zur kultischen Deutung des Hohenliedes," *Zeitschrift für die altestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Vol. LXIV, No. 1 [1952], p. 150). For a similar claim concerning Ugarit, see above, p. 191 and n. 1.

[3] See above, pp. 57-59, 154, nn. 2, 3.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[5] "So ist das Ergebnis dieser ersten Phase ugaritischer Forschung, die mit dem Abbruch der Grabungen bei Kriegsausbruch schloss, und das Ergebnis der seitherigen Aufarbeitung des angesammelten Materials

The problem of Biblical editing

It is a commonplace of contemporary Biblical scholarship that motifs borrowed from ancient mythologies appear in the canonical texts in a "demythologized" form.[1] These vestiges have nonetheless suggested to certain interpreters that some ancient Hebrews--possibly even a majority of them[2]--engaged in religious practices almost entirely excluded from the surviving documents.[3] The credit--or blame--for this process of

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eindeutig das, dass die Texte weniger unmittelbare Beziehung zum AT haben, als es anfänglich schien" (Walter Baumgartner, "Ugaritische Probleme und ihre Tragweite für das Alte Testament," Theologische Zeitschrift, Vol. III, No. 2 [1947], p. 85). Still later, Morton Smith issued the reminder that "between the Ugaritica and the Old Testament lies the complete destruction of the former culture by barbarian invasions." He went on to the rather extreme contention that "the striking thing about the religion of Ugaritica is its almost total lack of any direct relationship to that of the Old Testament" (JBL, LXXI, 3, pp. 135-36).

[1] "In Israel we have a very radical departure from the characteristic mythical thought in terms of harmony or correspondence" (Barr, VT, IX, 1, p. 7). For a discussion of mythical "correspondence," see above, pp. 4-5, 9-15. Cf. likewise Richardson, SJT, IX, 1, p. 40; and Brevard S. Childs, Myth and Reality in the Old Testament ("Studies in Biblical Theology," No. 27; Naperville, Illinois: Alec R. Allenson, Inc., 1960), passim. See also below, p. 201, n. 4.

[2] "Only one comparatively small portion of that Israel is allowed to speak freely in the Old Testament texts in their present form, whereas the opinion of opposing portions, surely comprising the overwhelming majority of the nation, finds expression only in scanty fragments and in partly disguised allusions or in the distorted polemics of its adversaries" (Geo. Widengren, "Early Hebrew Myths and Their Interpretation," MRAK, p. 200).

[3] "The transforming influence of later Yahwism has almost completely obliterated the elements of the dying and rising god, the sacred marriage, and the place of the king in the rites; but enough traces remain to show that they were once there, although long since forgotten" (Theophile J. Meek, "The Song of Songs: Introduction and Exegesis," The Interpreter's Bible, ed. George Arthur Buttrick [New York: Abingdon Press, 1956], Vol. V, p. 95a).

bowdlerization generally goes to the prophetic movement.[1]

The inclination of the "patternists," therefore, is "à lire ce qu'il y a derrière les textes, de préférence à ce qu'il y a dedans."[2] They tend further to focus their attention upon the poetical books and passages, where most of the mythical and cultic survivals admittedly are concentrated.[3] This tendency leads to a disregard for the historical footing offered by the prose narratives, in favor of drawing the primary inferences from documents whose historical content is uncertain at best. To read a "pattern" thus obtained back into the otherwise silent historical accounts is a procedure which can hardly lay claim to great scientific credibility.[4]

Even in the poetic passages, the mythological and ritual allusions are limited in scope and largely uninformative as to their original meanings. So, "for the most part we have to rely for our information on occasional references whose full import is realized only in the light of comparative mythology."[1] Such reliance is based upon several presuppositions against which this study has already contended.[2] The outcome of such a methodology is, in the words of Mowinckel, to "construct a ritual pattern which is found everywhere, though it existed nowhere."[3]

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[1] "The prophets succeeded in eradicating almost completely from the religion and the literature of their people the characteristic features of the ancient pattern" (Hooke, "The Myth and Ritual Pattern in Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic," The Labyrinth: Further Studies in the Relation between Myth and Ritual in the Ancient World, ed. Hooke, [London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1935], p. 231). So one encounters the assertion that it is "of vital importance to distinguish between the religion of Hebrews in general and the religion of the Hebrew prophets" (A. C. Bouquet, Comparative Religion: A Short Outline [5th ed.; Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1956], p. 211).

[2] de Fraine, Biblica, XXXVII, 1, p. 70.

[3] Cf. Widengren, MRAK, p. 158.

[4] "Eine Exegese, die vom Ungewissen ausgeht, um das Gewisse danach zu interpretieren, dürfte kaum je den Erfolg haben, den die aufgewandte Mühe verdient" (Bernhardt, AKAT, p. 306). Cf. ibid., pp. 82-83; Hans-Joachim Kraus, Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament: Untersuchungen zu den Liedern von Jahwes Thronbesteigung ("Beiträge zur historischen Theologie," ed. Gerhard Ebeling, No. 13; Tübingen: Verlag J. C. B. Mohr, 1951), pp. 21-22.

Was there an *hieros gamos* in Israel?

In the original volume of "myth and ritual" essays, W. O. E.

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[1] Theodore H. Robinson, "Hebrew Myths," *MAR*, p. 184. In the sequel volume, Widengren commented: "I should like to emphasize this methodological remark with which I fully agree but which is obviously not everywhere accepted" (*MRAK*, p. 177). It is obviously accepted by Jes Peter Asmussen, who writes: "Wenn das Fruchtbarkeitsmotiv in seiner Eigenart ganz herausbearbeitet wird, ist es berechtigt, von einem 'ritual pattern' für den ganzen nahen Orient zu sprechen und sowohl nicht-israelitisches als auch nicht-semitisches Material zu verwenden" ("Bemerkungen zur sakralen Prostitution im Alten Testament," *ST*, Vol. XI, No. 1 [1957], p. 168).

[2] Against the notion that "similarities are generic," see above, pp. 18-21. Against the assumption that the presence of one element from another ritual pattern argues the presence of the whole pattern, see *ibid.*, pp. 24-28. Against the supposition that a borrowed culture trait maintains its original meaning in the new cultural context, see *ibid.*, p. 22. On this point, see further, Goff, *JBL*, LVII, 2, pp. 156-57; T. Worden, "The Literary Influence of the Ugaritic Fertility Myth on the Old Testament, *VT*, Vol. III, No. 3 (1953), pp. 276-77; Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs: A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary* ("Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America," Vol. XX; New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 5714-1954), p. 7, n. 30; Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, p. 61.

[3] This is his judgment on "Engnell, Widengren, and other representatives of this school" (*ibid.*, p. 27). For a similar critique, including Mowinckel himself, see A. R. Johnson, "Divine Kingship and the Old Testament," *The Expository Times*, Vol. XLII, No. 2 (1950), p. 41.

Oesterley cited the practice of sojourning in booths, the evidence of ritual prostitution in the Temple, and the reference to Anath in the Elephantine papyri in favor of supposing that the Sacred Marriage was at one time celebrated in Israel.[1] In a companion essay, T. H. Robinson supported this hypothesis, adding the witness of the Song of Solomon and the marital imagery in Hosea.[2] S. H. Hooke, in two subsequent volumes, generally concurred in their estimates.[3]

All of these claims are caught up in a characteristically sweeping assertion from the pen of Geo. Widengren:

> Unter Berufung auf das, was wir in diesem Exkurs sowie früher ausgeführt haben, glauben wir sagen zu können, dass hier und da in Israel Jahve als Ehegatte einer Göttin, wahrscheinlich der ᶜAnāt--vielleicht auch Aschtart genannt--gefeiert wurde, dass der König im Kultus dieselbe Rolle spielte, dass die Lieder im Hohenlied diese Riten widerspiegeln, dass die Hochzeit in einer Hütte auf dem *māḫōl* zum *Sukkōt*-Feste gefeiert und die sakrale Prostitution dadurch legitimiert wurde.[4]

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[1] He admitted that "we are on less sure ground with regard to the sacred marriage," but averred that these features "do suggest the possibility that in earlier days this conception was in some way represented" ("Early Hebrew Festival Rituals," *MAR*, p. 145).

[2] "It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that rites, similar to those found elsewhere, were observed in pre-exilic Israel, and that these included a recital or a representation of the annual marriage of Jahweh and Anath" (*ibid.*, p. 185).

[3] The above-mentioned elements, omitting the Song of Songs, constitute "indirect evidence to the existence of the sacred marriage as part of Hebrew ritual at an earlier period" (*Origins . . .*, p. 54). He subsequently added "the persistence of such elements as the ritual combat and the sacred marriage on into Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic" to the testimony (*The Siege Perilous: Essays in Biblical Anthropology and Kindred Subjects* [London: SCM Press Ltd, 1956], p. 181). Cf. a less specific claim by E. O. James, *Ancient Gods*, p. 92.

[4] *SK*, p. 79.

The remaining task of this study is to consider in some order the various Biblical evidences alleged to support the foregoing claim.

Yahweh as Mate

The *hieros gamos* certainly cannot be said to occur except where there are both male and female deities to celebrate it. Yet it seems widely agreed that the God of the Hebrews was inclined still less to sexual than to numerical differentiation.[1] Where are the signs that this was not always and everywhere the case?

Aetiological fragments

Several ancient myths of beginnings may well be considered, even though they do not commonly appear among the evidences adduced as testimony to a hierogamy in Israel. The first would be the following portion of the Creation account:

> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."[2]

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[1] "Die Grenze des Anthropomorphismus Jahwes liegt endlich in der Ausschaltung der Sexualität" (Johannes Hempel, "Die Grenzen des Anthropomorphismus Jahwes im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, Vol. LVII, Nos. 1-2 [1939], p. 83). "Für Israel war die geschlechtliche Polarität etwas Geschaffenes und nicht gottheitlich" (Gerhard von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Vol. I: *Die Theologie der geschichtlichen Überlieferungen Israels* [München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958], p. 146). "The Yahweh of the Psalms has no female partner" (Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, trans. D. R. Ap -Thomas [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962], Vol. I, p. 99). Cf. also Fohrer, *ThLZ*, LXVIII, 4. col. 199; Asmussen, *ST*, XI, 1, p. 168.

[2] Gen. 1:26a, 27-28a. The translation used here and hereafter is

The question obviously posed by this text is whether human sexuality was derived from the divine image. Against such an interpretation, Hempel argued that the procreative power is not here conferred by the act of creation, but by the act of blessing.[1] This plausible suggestion would also seem to vitiate Bentzen's hypothesis that the initial pair themselves constitute "the 'First Couple,' i. e. the first *hieros gamos*."[2] In no case does it appear tenable to infer from this text that man was brought into being through divine sexual activity.

A somewhat different problem is posed by Genesis 6:1-4, where it is said that "the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose." Childs calls it "a foreign particle of pagan mythology within the Hebrew tradition,"[3] and seeks to demonstrate how the Yahwistic editor has "broken" the myth.[4]

The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1946-1952). Comparisons with the Hebrew text will be based upon *Biblica Hebraica*, ed. Rudolph Kittel (3rd ed.; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1937). English transliterations from Hebrew follow the standards adopted in *ZAW*.

[1] "Es ist daher falsch, im Sinne der Priesterschrift von einem 'Zweigeschlechterwesen' als dem Anfang der Schöpfung zu sprechen und von da aus auf eine Zweigeschlechtlichkeit Jahwes zurückzuschliessen" (*ZAW*, LVII, 1-2, p. 85). "Throughout the history of Israel these three things [fertility of womb and field and conquest of enemies] are the main points of what is understood by blessing" (Pedersen, *Israel*, I-II [1926], p. 212).

[2] *King and Messiah*, p. 42.

[3] *Myth and Reality . . .*, p. 54.

[4] He regards it as aetiological, explaining the origin of the Nephilim (*ibid.*, p. 55). The divine judgment (6:3) is interposed by the Yahwist, "breaking completely the causal connexion between the presence of giants and the illicit relationship of the 'sons of gods'" (*ibid.*, p. 56). See above, p. 196, n. 1.

At any rate the action clearly does not involve Yahweh himself,[1] and so need not be pursued further here.

There is in the Abraham story an episode in which Yahweh does figure, namely Sarah's miraculous conception. "The Lord visited Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did to Sarah as he had promised."[2] Widengren has advanced the view that the root pqd sometimes was employed in a sexual sense in Middle Hebrew, and may be so understood in this passage.[3] The present writer has been unable to locate any such usage in the canonical texts.[4] It appears more likely that the intent of the passage corresponds with Eve's exclamation: "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord";[5] or with the statement concerning Rachel that "God hearkened to her and opened her womb."[6]

Finally, under this heading, there is the perennially knotty Yahwist account of the origin of circumcision:

> At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched Moses' [Heb. "his"] feet with it, and said, 'Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!' So he let him

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[1] Von Rad speaks of "Elohimwesen" (Theologie . . ., I, p. 150). Baumgartner asserts that the passage "betrifft nicht seine Person und steht unter einem ganz anderen Gesichtspunkt" (TZ, III, 2, p. 96).

[2] Gen. 21:1.

[3] "If this special shade of meaning is assumed in this place the original meaning of the passage in question would be that the visiting deity had sexual intercourse with Sarah" (MRAK, p. 184).

[4] The same phraseology is employed with regard to Hannah in I Sam. 2:21, but duplicates the problem here being discussed.

[5] Gen. 4:1.

[6] Gen. 30:22.

> alone. Then it was that she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.[1]

Hooke, following Eduard Meyer, took the epithet to have been addressed to Yahweh, "Zipporah thus intimating that she had become a participant in the rite of the sacred marriage."[2] Even if one would allow that it was Yahweh's "nakedness"which Zipporah touched with the severed foreskin, it is clear that the implied relationship is somehow substitutionary. It "intimates" nothing whatsoever about her as a "participant" in any hierogamic act.

Divine filiation in the Psalter

Two motifs from the Book of Psalms may also be taken up at this point. The first of them begins with the assertion that "the heavens are telling the glory of God," and continues:

> In them he has set a tent for the sun,
> which comes forth like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
> and like a strong man runs its course with joy.[3]

That this is a "mythical fragment"[4] seems a perfectly reasonable judgment.[1] Widengren notes that "El himself is not the bridegroom,"[2] but proceeds thence to the textually unfounded assertion that "it is thus a younger god who in this place is thought of as the partner in the Hieros Gamos."[3] Whatever the original form of the hymn, the present passage neither depicts the sun as a god[4] nor focuses on any conjugal action. The sun is here "like a bridegroom" (*k^{e}ḥatan*) with regard to his mood in departing to take up his daily task. Certainly this text offers no encouragement to those who suppose that Yahweh may have functioned as a partner in a divine couple.

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[1] Ex. 4:24-26.

[2] Origins . . ., p. 62. Meyer wrote: "Clearly therefore she cast the foreskin at Yahweh's male organ, so that this became bloody; therefore he is now her . . . 'bridegroom of blood'; this can mean only that he has acquired her as his bride, and has become bloody in consequence" (Die Israeliten und ihre Nachbarstämme [Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1906], p. 59; trans. in Julian Morgenstern, "The 'Bloody Husband(?)' (Exod. 4:24-26) Once Again," Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. XXXIV [1963], p. 44, n. 27). Morgenstern considers Meyer's "hypothetical exposition" of the passage "so far-fetched and groundless that it requires no further discussion or refutation" (ibid.). Childs is more sympathetic, but rejects it as requiring unnecessary emendation (Myth and Reality . . ., p. 61).

[3] Ps. 19:4b-5.

[4] Widengren, MRAK, p. 182.

The second motif has to do with the divine filiation of the king, and occurs in the following passages in the Psalter:

> I will tell of the decree of the Lord:
> He said to me, "You are my son,
> today I have begotten you."[5]
>
> He shall cry to me, "Thou art my Father,
> my God, and the Rock of my salvation."
> And I will make him the first-born,
> the highest of the kings of the earth.[6]
>
> From the womb of the morning
> like dew your youth will come to you.[7]

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[1] "There are also good reasons to suppose that the first part of Ps. 19, which is without doubt a fragment of an earlier poem included by the author in his own psalm, originally belonged to a Canaanite creation hymn to the sun" (Mowinckel, *Psalms . . .*, II, p. 190).

[2] *MRAK*, p. 182.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Cf. Elmer A. Leslie, *The Psalms: Translated and Interpreted in the Light of Hebrew Life and Worship* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 135.

[5] Ps. 2:7.

[6] Ps. 89:26-27.

[7] Ps. 110:3.

Those who contend for "divine kingship" in Israel wish these passages to be understood literally,[1] though they do recognize the ambiguities in the textual evidence.[2]

There is no question but that the language of these salutations finds earlier parallels in the literature of Egypt,[3] Canaan,[4] and

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[1] "The best proofs of the king as son of the god [within the northwest Semitic area] are given in the O.T., the most important of them being, of course, Psalm 2.7" (Engnell, Studies, p. 80). Asmussen says of the same passage: "Sowohl in den ost- als auch in den west-semitisch wie in den sumerischen Texten ist der König göttlich, der Sohn Gottes, der in Namen Gottes Fruchtbarkeit hervorbringen sollte" (ST, XI, 1, pp. 167-68). On the "divinity" of Sumerian kings, see above, pp. 93-95. It should be noted further that no reference to fertility of any kind occurs in Psalm 2, whose one concern is the king's continued political hegemony.

[2] Bentzen admits that "Psalm 2 expressly uses the idea of adoption" (King and Messiah, p. 40), but adds: "'Adoption' is generally understood as a milder, more 'demythologized', expression of Divine Sonship than so-called 'physical' sonship. I do not think it is. As described by Labat [see above, pp. 94, n. 4; 95, n. 1], that is, as a sort of 'milk-relationship', it must have been just as 'physical' as 'real' sonship" (ibid., p. 88, n. 15). [One can only ask: At whose divine breasts might the King of Israel have been suckled?] Contending that Ps. 110:3 is corrupt (ibid., p. 87, n. 6), Bentzen asserts that it "originally described the supernatural birth of the king in more mythological terms" (ibid., p. 88, n. 16). In that case it "possibly" "preserves the idea of the royal prince as being born of the 'queen-goddess'" (ibid., p. 39). Widengren also straddles the issue: "Man muss feststellen, dass die erste Hälfte der Formel [Ps. 2:7] den Adoptionscharakter wahrt, hingegen nicht die zweite, die man also mit ähnlichen vorderasiatischen und ägyptischen Formeln am Krönungstage zusammenhalten muss" (SK, p. 103, n. 18).

[3] "En résumé, ce psaume ii a donc bien son prototype dans les dialogues d'intronisation entre un pharaon et son dieu que nous font connaître les stèles égyptiennes" (J. de Savignac, "Théologie Pharaonique et Messianisme d'Israël," VT, Vol. III, No. 1 [1957], p. 90).

[4] "Le Psaume CX se classe donc parmi ceux qui s'inspirent ou qui ont hérité de la poésie cananéenne, ou du moins qui révèlent des contacts curieux avec cette littérature" (J. Coppens, "Les apports du

Mesopotamia.[1] This is especially true of the difficult verse Psalm 110:3b, which has also been translated: "From the womb of the Dawn have I fathered thee."[2]

While the language may have been borrowed, however, it is the overwhelming scholarly consensus that its meaning has been modified. These texts from the Psalms are most probably oracles,[3] implying Yahweh's "adoption" of the king into a filial relationship with himself.[4]

Psaume CX (Vulg. CIX) à l'idéologie royale Israélite," *Sacral Kingship*, p. 346). Of this Psalm, de Savignac writes that "il faudrait donc admettre un certain mélange d'expressions égyptiennes et phéniciennes qui a d'ailleurs certainement existé" ("Essai d'interprétation du Psaume CX à l'aide de la littérature égyptienne," *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, Vol. IX [1951], p. 127).

[1] "The language used [in Ps. 110:3] is probably derived from the myth of the birth of the new sun god on an 'unknown mountain,' as is recorded of the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal" (Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, p. 62).

[2] Johnson, "The Rôle of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus," *The Labyrinth*, ed. Hooke, p. 110. So also Widengren (*SK*, p. 44); and H. J. Kraus, who comments: "*Šḥr* ist wohl ursprünglich eine Göttin; vielleicht ist im Bereich des Mythos ein *hieros gamos* vorauszusetzen" (*Psalmen* ["Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament," ed. Martin Noth, Vol. XV, Nos. 1-2; 2nd ed. rev.; Wageningen, Niederlande: Neukirchener Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins Neukirchen Kreis Moers, 1961], II, p. 759).

[3] Cf. Pss. 2:7a; 89:19a; 110:1a; II Sam. 7:4, 14a.

[4] Zimmern, *König Lipit-Ištar's Vergöttlichung*, p. 29 [Ps. 2]; Johnson, *The Labyrinth*, ed. Hooke, p. 107 [Pss. 2, 110]; Pedersen, *Israel*, III-IV, p. 432 [Pss. 2, 89]; "In none of the passages which employ the father-son picture does there remain any hint of a belief in a physical sonship" (G. Ernest Wright, "The Terminology of Old Testament Religion and Its Significance," *JNES*, Vol. I, No. 4 [1942], p. 408 [II Sam. 7:14; Pss. 2, 89]; von Rad, "Das jüdische Königsritual," *ThLZ*, Vol. LXXII, No. 4 (1947), col. 214 [II Sam. 7; Ps. 2]; Albrecht Alt, "Das Königtum in den Reichen Israel und Juda," *VT*, Vol. I, No. 1 (1951), p. 21 [II Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2]; "They are merely obsequious utterances voiced by court

Parallels have been adduced both for the adoptive formula[1] and for the "'métaphore' du 'fils de Dieu'."[2]

Prophetic marital imagery

The analysis thus far has failed to identify Yahweh as one member of a divine couple or as one partner in a sexual union. It is all the more striking, therefore, to come upon the clear prophetic references to him as a "husband":

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poets" (I. Mendelsohn, "Authority and Law in Canaan-Israel," *Authority and Law in the Ancient Orient*, ed. Henry M. Hoenigswald ["Supplement to *JAOS*," No. 17; Baltimore: American Oriental Society, 1954], p. 29 [II Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2]; Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), p. 25 [Ps. 89]; Noth, *Gesammelte Studien . . .*, pp. 222-23 [II Sam. 7:14; Pss. 2, 110]; Coppens, *Sacral Kingship*, p. 338 [Pss. 2, 110]; "Der Ermächtigungsspruch an den König von Jerusalem liegt nun--zunächst phänomenologisch betrachtet--zwischen der ägyptischen und der mesopotamischen Auffassung" (H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, I, p. 19 [Ps. 2]; II, p. 623 [II Sam. 7:14; Ps. 89]; *idem*, *Gottesdienst in Israel: Grundriss einer Geschichte des alttestamentlichen Gottesdienstes* (2nd ed. rev.; München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1962), p. 259 [Ps. 110]; Mowinckel, *Psalms . . .*, I, p. 63 [Pss. 2, 89, 110]; Otto Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (3rd ed. rev.; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1964), p. 87 [Ps. 2]; p. 139 [Ps. 110].

[1] "According to the Code of Hammurabi, when someone adopted a person, he said to him, 'You are my son,' and if the latter wanted to break the bond thus created, he would say, 'You are not my father' or 'You are not my mother.' Such declarative formulas were used in Israel for engagements: 'To-day you shall be my son-in-law (I S 18:21), for marriage: 'Henceforth you are her brother and she is your sister' (Tb 7:11), and for divorce: 'She is no longer my wife' (Os 2:4)" (Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. John McHugh [New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961], p. 341). Cf. *ANET*, p. 173b, Nos. 170-71; p. 175a, No. 192.

[2] Cf. Ex. 4:22f.; Deut. 32:6; Hos. 11:1; Jer. 31:9. Cited by J. de Fraine, *L'aspect religieux de la royauté Israelite: l'institution monarchique dans l'Ancien Textament et dans les textes Mesopotamiens* ("Analecta Biblica," Vol. III; Roma: Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1954, p. 273).

> Then she shall say, "I will go and return to my first husband,
> for it was better with me then than now."[1]

> For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name.[2]

> Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord.[3]

> Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband![4]

His wife or bride appears earlier as "the house of Israel,"[5] and later as "Jerusalem."[6] In neither case is any justification provided for describing her as a "goddess," nor is there any hint that she is intended to symbolize a goddess. Moreover, this presently faithless socio-geographical "wife" is first to be punished[7] and then restored:

> And I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord.[8]

In short, the relationship suggested in this imagery is more historical than mythical, and more ethical than cultic.[1] What then is to be made of the contrast depicted by Hosea?:

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[1] Hos. 2:7b.

[2] Is. 54:5a.

[3] Jer. 31:32.

[4] Ez. 16:32. Widengren writes: "Hes. 16 wird Jerusalem als die Gattin Jahves geschildert; in Hes. 23 aber sind es die beiden Schwestern Ohola and Oholiba, d. i. Samaria und Jerusalem, die als seine Gemahlinnen geschildert werden. Eigentümlicherweise hat auch El in Ugarit zwei Frauen (der Text SS)" (SK, p. 77). The husband-wife relationship is at most implied in Ezekiel's polemic, which is patently a historical allegory, whose possible relationship to the Ugaritic myth of Shachar and Shalim (see above, pp. 175-78) completely eludes the present writer!

[5] Hos. 2:2 (cf. 1:6); Jer. 3:20(?).

[6] Jer. 2:2; Is. 54:6(?); Ez. 16:32 (cf. 16:1-2).

[7] Hos. 2:3, 9-12.

[8] Hos. 2:19-20.

> And in that day, says the Lord, you will call me, "My husband," and no longer will you call me, "My Baal."[2]

Does this mean, as contended, that Yahweh had played the role of Baal?[3]

It may be replied, first, that if this is so, the "wife" had been somewhat unclear about Yahweh's participation in the rite, since "she did not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the wine, and the oil, and who lavished upon her silver and gold which they used for Baal."[4] Moreover, it might reasonably be expected that Hosea's polemic would have been more specific and vigorous, had such a substitution been taking place.[5]

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[1] "Jahwes Partnerin im Ehegleichnis ist statt irgendeiner Göttin das geschichtliche Israel. So ist das mythische Denken glatt zur Strecke gebracht. Die Rechtskategorien des Bundesdenkens treten an die Stelle der mythisch-kultischen Fruchtbarkeitsvorstellungen, die im *hieros gamos* beheimatet sind" (Hans Walter Wolff, *Dodekapropheton 1 Hosea* ["Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament," ed. Martin Noth, Vol. XIV, Nos. 1-4; Wageningen, Niederlande: Neukirchener Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins Neukirchen Kreis Moers, 1961], p. xix). Cf. Theophile James Meek, *Hebrew Origins* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 224-25.

[2] Hos. 2:16.

[3] Widengren even argues that "Hosea opponiert in diesem Fall nur dagegen, dass Jahve als Partner in dieser heiligen Ehe Ba^{c}al genannt wird" (*SK*, p. 77). Hooke claims only that the passage "shows that there were levels of religion in Israel, widely spread throughout the country, in which Yahweh was spoken of as a Baal and was associated in popular thought with those sexual elements in the fertility cults of Canaan whose existence is well attested. If this be denied, Hosea's polemic loses its point" (*MRAK*, p. 20). Wolff, referring to the Elephantine papyri, says: "Von da aus könnte die Anrede 'mein Baal' als ein Element kultischer Darstellung der heiligen Hochzeit verstanden werden" (*Hosea*, p. 60). See below, p. 213, n. 1.

[4] Hos. 2:8.

[5] See below, p. 219.

It may be observed, further, that this kind of argument is capable of exerting force in more than one direction. The prophetic imagery does seem to imply not only a popular acquaintance with Canaanite myth and ritual, but also some penetration by the latter of the cult of Yahweh.[1] It is equally plausible, however, to contend that the prophets would not have dared to use such provocative symbolism, had there seemed the slightest danger of its being misappropriated.[2]

A Consort for Yahweh

There are hints, then, which may be interpreted to mean that some syncretism had occurred at the popular level. This may even have included the supposition that Yahweh, like Baal, engaged in a Sacred Marriage. The texts offer no glimmer of a suggestion, however, as to who his partner might have been. It is this crucial hiatus which some interpreters have hoped to close by means of the documents next to be considered.

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[1] "In attempting to stamp out baalism they would have avoided reference to the nation's marriage to Yahweh if that concept originated in and was associated only with the baalized forms of Hebrew religion" (Beatrice A. Brooks, "Fertility Cult Functionaries in the Old Testament," JBL, Vol. LX, No. 3 [1941], p. 231).

[2] Hosea and Ezekiel "stellen Jahwe dar als den Ehegemahl irdischer Frauen, ohne fürchten zu müssen, dass diese Darstellungen im mythologischen Sinne missverstanden wurden" (von Rad, Theologie . . ., I, p. 37). Cf. Worden, VT, III, 3, pp. 296-97. The force of this argument is also expressed in reverse in Stanley A. Cook's anachronous assertion that "this idea of a marriage union encouraged licentious rites, as symbolical expressions of that union (hence, e.g., the necessity of the prohibitions in Deut. xxiii. 17f.)" (The Old Testament: A Reinterpretation [Cambridge, England: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1936], p. 103). The prophetic writings presuppose that the violations mentioned in Deuteronomy already existed, and there is certainly no evidence to show that these practices were subsequently "encouraged" by the marital imagery.

The pantheon at Elephantine

Early in this century there came to light a variety of Aramaic papyri and ostraka from a mound on the island of Elephantine, at the first cataract of the Nile.[1] Dating from the 5th century B.C., they revealed the presence there of a Jewish mercenary garrison, whose temple to Yaho, it was claimed, had been in existence at least as far back as the neo-Babylonian period.[2] It appears possible that the Passover may have been celebrated in attenuated form,[3] and there are clear references to familiar meal-offerings, incense, and burnt-offerings in the temple.[4] In short, at least some of the features of the cult of Yahweh were still observed by this Diaspora community. Therefore the implications of the following record of contributions have been much discussed:

> On the 3rd of Phamenoth, year 5. This is (*sic!*) the names of the Jewish garrison which (*sic!*) gave money to the God Yaho, [2 shekels] each.

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[1] Cf. the account of the discoveries in Emil G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri: New Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. from the Jewish Colony at Elephantine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 9-15.

[2] Cf. *ANET*, p. 492a, 13.

[3] Cf. "The Passover Papyrus," *ANET*, p. 491a. Kraeling considers the restorations in this text "purely conjectural" and "unlikely" (*Brooklyn Museum . . .*, p. 95). In any case, as he points out, the sacrifice of a lamb would have been provocative to the worshippers of the Egyptian god Khnum and offensive to Persian officers (*ibid.*, p. 96).

[4] *ANET*, p. 492a-b, 21; p. 492b, 10.

> (Lines 2-119, 126-135 name 123 contributors of both sexes.)
> (120-125) Cash on hand with Yedoniah the son of Gemariah on the said day of the month of Phamenoth: 31 _karash_, 8 shekels. Comprising: for Yaho 12 _k._, 6 sh.; for Ishumbethel 7 _k._; for Anathbethel 12 _k._[1]

The latter name is commonly taken as being parallel to or identical with that of Anathyahu, which occurs elsewhere in a court oath.[2] Just what do these names signify?

If they are understood as referring to deities,[3] then the text confronts the reader with a goddess, whose relationship to Yahu calls out for further definition. Responses to this call range from the relatively modest proposal that Anath was Yahu's _paredros_ or consort,[4] to the more suggestive asseveration that she was his "spouse."[1] Still more daring, it would seem, are her identification as Yahu's "daughter,"[2] or as part of a divine triad.[3] All of the foregoing modes of association are called into question by Hans Bardtke's reminder that whereas Yahu is identified as "the god who dwells in Yeb the fortress,"[4] the papyri record no such claim concerning the other names.[5]

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[1] _ANET_, p. 491a.

[2] "Il est clair que ces deux êtres divins étaient étroitement associés à Yahou, que par conséquent Anat-bethel doit être un autre vocable désignant la déesse appelée ailleurs Anat-Yahou" (Adolphe Lods, _Dès prophètes à Jesus: Les prophètes d'Israél et les débuts du Judaïsme_ ["L'évolution de l'humanité," ed. Henri Berr, Vol. XXVII; Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1935], p. 348). Cf. Albright, _FSAC_, p. 373; Kraeling, _Brooklyn Museum . . ._, p. 91.

[3] "That ^{c}Anathbethel and Eshembethel are deities seems indubitable, This is particularly obvious in the case of ^{c}Anathbethel, for ^{c}Anath, by itself, is the name of a goddess" (_ibid._, p. 88).

[4] "Yahô demeure le dieu principal et le sanctuaire de la colonie est son temple, mais ils se sont laissés pénétrer par le paganisme ambiant et ils lui associent une déesse parèdre ^{c}Anat" (Albert Vincent, _La religion des Judéo-Araméens d'Éléphantine_ [Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1937], p. 651). "It looks as if ^{c}Anath were regarded as a female consort of Ya'u, Queen, as he was King, of Heaven" (H. Idris Bell, _Cults and Creeds in Graeco-Roman Egypt_ [Liverpool: The University Press, 1953], p. 29). Mowinckel avers that "she was regarded as Yahweh's consort, sharing his throne" (_He That Cometh_, p. 115). Von Rad characterizes her as "eine weibliche Throngenossin" (_Theologie . . ._, I, p. 37, n. 34).

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[1] Oesterley, MAR, p. 145. Slightly later Oliver S. Rankin declared that "Anath-Bethel and Aschem-Bethel are the wives of Jahwe" (Israel's Wisdom Literature: Its Bearing on Theology and the History of Religion [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936], p. 229). Wolff brings up the obvious parallel: "Jahwe ist einer weiblichen Gottheit zugeordnet wie in Ugarit Baal der Anath" (Hosea, p. 60). Cf. also Asmussen, ST, XI, 1, p. 169.

[2] "As for ^{c}Anathyahu, since she is parallel to ^{c}Anathbethel, or even identical with her, and since we have taken Eshembethel to mean the spouse of Bethel, it may be best to regard her as the daughter of the god" (Kraeling, Brooklyn Museum . . ., p. 91). The present writer fails to follow this logic. If anything, "daughter" is even more demonstrative of Yahu's sexual involvement than "wife."

[3] The two names beside that of Yahu are "offenbar eine weibliche Gottheit und anscheinend ein jugendlicher Gott, also eine Göttertrias, wie sie in dieser Zusammensetzung auch sonst auf altvorderasiatischem Boden bekannt ist" (Martin Noth, Geschichte Israels [2nd ed. rev.; Berlin: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 1953], p. 266). This is an interesting suggestion, since the combination of individual gods into triads was a relatively common Egyptian phenomenon (cf. Drioton et Vandier, L'Égypte, p. 65). Indeed, there was just such a triad at Elephantine, composed of Chnum, Anouki, and Sati (Vandier, La religion Égyptienne ["Introduction à l'histoire des religions: 1: Les anciennes religions Orientales," Vol. I; 2nd ed. rev.; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1949], p. 25).

[4] Brooklyn No. 12, 1; Kraeling, Brooklyn Museum . . ., p. 271. See Kraeling's commentary, ibid., pp. 85,269.

[5] "Er ist der Gott, der zu Jeb der Festung wohnt; von den anderen göttlichen Namen wird das nie gesagt, sie tauchen nur in der Tempelsteuerlisteauf oder im Fall eines Schwurs" ("Elephantine und die jüdische Gemeinde der Perserzeit," Das Altertum, Vol. VI, No. 1 [1960], p. 30).

The possibility that these are not deities at all can scarcely be ignored, inasmuch as it has been championed by the prodigious scholarship of W. F. Albright. He contended that the names designated divine hypostases,[1] indicating that "the speculations of Philo may prove to go back to Jewish-Egyptian religious thought."[2] This interpretation has been justly accused of requiring theological sophistication well beyond the level otherwise revealed in the Elephantine documents.[3] In addition to this reservation, it might be questioned whether divine hypostases would receive separate entries in lists of offerings.[4]

That some measure of real polytheism existed at Elephantine is further suggested by greetings occasionally encountered in personal correspondence. "The welfare of my brethren may the gods seek," says one letter-writer,[1] while another addresses a fellow Jew of superior station with the salutation: "I bless you by Yaho and Khn[ub]."[2]

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[1] "The Evolution of the West-Semitic Divinity ^{c}An-^{c}Anat-^{c}Attâ," *AJSL*, Vol. XLI, No. 2 (1925), pp. 96-97. Accepted by Gray, *LC*, pp. 128-29; Bardtke, *Das Altertum*, VI, 1, p. 30.

[2] *AJSL*, XLI, 2, p. 97. Two years later he defended this position, on such additional grounds as the ancient significance of names, the popularity of learned etymologizing, and the possible influence of Persian Mazdayasnianism ("Note on the Goddess ^{c}Anat," *AJSL*, Vol. XLIII, No. 3 [1927], pp. 233-34). More recently, his interpretation has been introduced with the proviso: "If the writer is correct . . . " (*FSAC*, p. 373).

[3] "A constater la pauvreté des concepts religieux des colons juifs de Ieb, il est impossible de leur prêter des vues théologiques aussi évoluées" (Vincent, *La religion . . .*, p. 648).

[4] Ginsberg skirts this problem with the proposal that "the monies for the other two deities were doubtless contributed by non-Jews, Yedoniah acting as treasurer or banker for all the Arameans of Elephantine" (*ANET*, p. 491a-b, n. 9). Against this reasoning, Kraeling observes that "there were more gods worshiped at Elephantine than the two referred to, and a general collector for all cults would seem an anomalous kind of dignitary" (*Brooklyn Museum . . .*, pp. 87-88).

The necessity for observing Egyptian commercial and legal customs involved the Jewish nationals in still other heterodox formulations. Thus one of the papyri was recovered "scellé au nom d'Amon RÂ,"[3] and there is a divorce settlement in which the Jewess Mibtahiah is recorded as swearing in the name of Sati, the goddess of Elephantine.[4] These evidences would seem to support Kraeling's contention that the Elephantine "polytheism" was an understandable consequence of the community's existence deep within an alien culture: "Mutual tolerance and a willingness to recognize other deities were almost a practical necessity."[5]

Elephantine and the Jewish homeland

Thus interpreted, the papyri have no necessary bearing on Hebrew myth and ritual at an earlier period. If the latter interest is to be served, it must be supposed that the Jewish immigrants brought these deities with them from Palestine,[1] and that their worship therefore reflects practices which prevailed among the pre-exilic Hebrews.[2] Thereby the way is prepared for the following claim:

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[1] Quoted in Bell, Cults and Creeds . . . , p. 30.

[2] ANET, p. 491b. Ginsberg identifies the latter name as "a famous male deity of Elephantine. If the completion is erroneous, the writer in any case invokes another deity besides Yaho" (ibid., n. 11).

[3] Lods, Les prophètes . . . , p. 347.

[4] ANET, p. 491b. See above, p. 213, n. 3.

[5] Brooklyn Museum . . . , p. 84. "Parce qu'ils ont perdu l'élite de leur population et qu'ils ne savent plus réagir, parce que des païens nombreux sont venus se mêler à eux, alors ils ont admis tous les dieux possibles" (Vincent, La religion . . . , pp. 9-10). Bernhardt agrees that this is "der schwierigen Situation einer solchen Diaspora-Gemeinde durchaus entsprechend" (AKAT, p. 273, n. 2).

> From our Old Testament alone we should never have guessed that Israel associated a goddess with Jahweh, even popularly, but the conclusion is irresistible, and we are justified in assuming that she played her part in the mythology and ritual of Israel. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that rites, similar to those found elsewhere, were observed in pre-exilic Israel, and that these included a recital or a representation of the annual marriage of Jahweh and Anath. *Details are entirely lacking, and no useful purpose would be served here by endeavoring to supply them conjecturally* [underlining mine].[3]

Anath's presence in Egypt hardly requires Jewish colonists for its explanation. A 12th century Egyptian papyrus represents her as a daughter of Re and a wife of Seth.[4] Meanwhile, her name as such appears nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures, nor indeed is she frequently mentioned in any remains from the Biblical period.[1]

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[1] So Albright: "These figures of Ešem, Bêt-el, ^{c}Anat, etc. . . . carry us unmistakably back to an older time, the age of Canaanite and Phoenician religious syncretism. In other words, they are pre-exilic Jewish or Israelite figures, or both. Since they are so definitely both Syrian and Hebrew, they must have originated in Palestine" (*AJSL*, XLI, 2, p. 97). Obermann also speaks of "a syncretism that would be inconceivable unless the colonists had brought it with them from their Judean homeland" (*Ugaritic Mythology*, p. xix).

[2] "Les colons juifs d'Éléphantine, qui, étant donné leur métier originel, devaient être tous des gens du peuple, perpétuaient évidemment, en plein v^{e} siècle, l'état religieux qui était celui des masses populaires en Palestine au temps où ils avaient quitté leur pays" (Lods, *Les prophètes . . .*, p. 349). Bell says that "the colonists at Elephantine represent the common, uninstructed mass of pre-exilic Judah" (*Cults and Creeds . . .*, p. 30).

[3] T. H. Robinson, *MAR*, pp. 185-86. Cf. Graham and May, *Culture and Conscience*, p. 90; Widengren, *SK*, p. 86, n. 69. See below, p. 218.

[4] *ANET*, p. 15a. Cf. an earlier reference to the war-horses of Seti I (1303-1290), *ibid.*, p. 254b. Pritchard says that "in Egypt Anat appears first in connection with the Hyksos invaders, who may have introduced her there" (*Palestinian Figurines in Relation to Certain Goddesses*

On Egyptian evidence,[2] there is some justification for associating her with the "Queen of Heaven," whose apparently widespread worship in Judah is recorded and condemned by Jeremiah.[3] That the Elephantine syncretism stemmed from the apostasies of this period[4] is "möglich, aber unbeweisbar."[5]

It is suggested further that "aus den Ortsnamen Anatot und Beth Anat ist zu schliessen, dass auch der Kult der Anat in jenen älteren Zeiten gepflegt wurde."[6] This is a conceivable inference, though hardly an informative one. An Egyptian stela bearing the encomium "Lady of

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Known Through Literature ["American Oriental Series," Vol. XXIV; Philadelphia: The American Oriental Society, 1943], p. 82).

[1] "In the biblical texts Anat appears only in place-names and in a proper name. She is not prominent in Phoenician texts. In the second millennium she seems to have enjoyed great popularity; in the first millennium, she is relatively unknown. At this time her function seems to have been taken over by Ashtart" (ibid., p. 82).

[2] "Anath, Astarte, and Qedesh each bore the Egyptian title, 'Lady of Heaven,' generally equivalent to the Hebrew Meleketh Hashshamaim, 'Queen of the Heavens'" (ANET, p. 250a).

[3] Jer. 7:17f.; 44:17.

[4] So M. J. Lagrange, Review of Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus einer jüdischen Militär-Kolonie zu Elephantine, by Eduard Sachau, RB, Vol. XXI, No. 1 (1912), p. 135. Followed by Vincent, La religion . . ., pp. 652-53; and Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 341.

[5] Bardtke, Das Altertum, VI, 1, p. 30.

[6] Von Rad, Theologie . . ., I, p. 31. Cf. Gray, LC, p. 128.

Heaven" does place Anath in 12th century Beth-Shan.[1] Perhaps a century later, the Philistines hung the corpse of Israel's first king on the walls of that city, and "put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth."[2]

If Anath and Ashtoreth are identified,[3] the goddess coupled with Yahweh in 5th century Egypt has then been traced back to one whom Hebrew historiography several times associated with the bᵉᶜalîm.[4] According to Widengren's reasoning, which has been pursued here, the following conclusion might therefore be drawn:

> Sowohl in Nordisrael, als auch in Juda hat also während mehrerer Jahrhunderte eine weibliche Gottheit in dem stark synkretistischen Staats- und Volkskultus als paredros Jahves Verehrung genossen.[5]

Leaving aside the several hypothetical connections in the argument leading up to it, such a conclusion appears quite difficult to reconcile with historical probability in the Biblical situation. The canonical texts nowhere associate Yahweh in any sense either with Ashtoreth or with the Queen of Heaven. Rather, their worship means that the people have "forsaken me"[1] and "provoked me to anger."[2] To contend that these phrases represent retrospective priestly finger-wagging and uncompromising prophetic thunder is only to deepen the mystery.[3] For if it was known to them that a goddess had been set alongside Yahweh, how is it possible to explain the silence of these zealous guardians of the First Commandment?[4]

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[1] ANET, p. 249b.

[2] I Sam. 31:10.

[3] "Die Wahrscheinlichkeit spricht dafür, dass diese Astarte als 'Königin des Himmels' im Grunde mit der als Paredros Jahves verehrten ᶜAnāt identisch ist" (SK, p. 12).

[4] "Dann wird im AT immer davon gesprochen, dass die Kinder Israels Jahve verliessen und den Baᶜalen und Astarten huldigten, d.h. kanaanäischen Göttern männlich und weiblichen Geschlechts" (ibid.). Cf. Jud. 10:6; I Sam. 7:3-4. The Biblical orthography, however, is ambiguous. The singular form (ᶜaštoræt) of the name occurs just three times, all of them in connection with Solomon's patronage of the Sidonian goddess (I Kgs. 11:5, 33; II Kgs. 23:13), and with no mention of Baal. It is only the plural form (ᶜaštarôt) which is mentioned in connection with the "baals." Hooke once contended that "the invariable conjunction of Baals and Astartes in Hebrew descriptions of Canaanite cults implies the widespread existence of the rite of the sacred marriage" (MAR, p. 85). The texts themselves seem to this writer to require nothing more than the association of two types of images at the shrines.

[5] SK, p. 12. See above, p. 216.

The association of Anath and Yahu in the Elephantine compounds stands alone. It is capable of being explained out of the naturally syncretistic tendencies of a Diaspora community,[5] though what it meant even there remains almost entirely hidden from us. It is hard to see how such cryptic "evidence" can possibly demonstrate that otherwise unattested concepts and rites prevailed in the Jewish homeland in earlier centuries.[6]

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[1] I Kgs. 11:33.

[2] Jer. 7:18.

[3] See above, pp. 196-97.

[4] Ibid., p. 209.

[5] Ibid., pp. 214-15.

[6] "The traces mentioned are too uncertain and isolated for anything real to be based upon them" (F. F. Hvidberg, Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament: A Study of Canaanite-Israelite Religion [København: Nyt Nordisk Forlag, Arnold Busck, 1962], p. 136). "On ne saurait donc en aucune façon tirer argument des croyances et des pratiques des Judéo-Araméens d'Éléphantine pour arguer de l'état de la religion d'Israël du VII^e au V^e siècle av. J.-C. Ces émigrés ne représentent en fait qu'eux-mêmes" (Vincent, La religion . . ., p. 9). Cf. G. W. Anderson, "Hebrew Religion," The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery

The paucity of the evidence which may be marshalled to implicate Yahweh in an hierogamy can be demonstrated simply by quoting one of the most determined advocates of the thesis. The respective historical and geographical contexts of his citations have been interpolated for emphasis:

> Die göttliche Hochzeiterin blieb in Palästina gewiss immer die von den Propheten daher so heftig befehdete "Himmelskönigin" [early 6th century, Jerusalem] Ištar mit ihrem "unzüchtigen Kult auf den Gassen". Der Gatte mochte auch im palästinischen Bereich Tammuz sein, wie ihn uns Ezechiel in seiner Vision noch nennt [early 6th century, Jerusalem]; an anderen Orten war er gewiss ein Ba^{c}al, etwa von jener Art, wie ihn die Mythen des syrischen Ugarit im II. Jahrtausend bei seinem Widerstreit mit Mōt und in seiner Verbindung mit ^{c}Anat zeigen [mid-14th century, N. Syria]; oder aber es war ein verwelschter Jahwe der Volksreligion selbst [Hosea? late 8th century, Israel], von dessem späten Dienst bei den Juden des oberägyptischen Elephantine ja . . . [it has been shown] dass auch er ein weibliches Äquivalent besessen hat [late 5th century, S. Egypt].[1]

In addition to comments already made on most of these matters, it may be noted that in the Biblical accounts, neither the "Queen of Heaven" nor Tammuz are expressly associated with sexual cultic practices. Moreover, there is no textual justification for connecting these two deities as husband and wife in the Hebrew context. That these allusions, so scattered in time and space, form a connected and coherent scheme, is an assertion which the present writer finds quite unconvincing.

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and Research, ed. H. H. Rowley (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1951), p. 299; Kapelrud, *Discoveries . . .*, p. 39.

[1] Schmökel, *ZAW*, LXIV, 1, p. 155.

Royal and Priestly Role-Players

The king as divine representative

In order to demonstrate that the hieros gamos was celebrated in Israel in harmony with the alleged ancient Near Eastern "pattern," it would also be necessary to give evidence of the king's participation in the role of Jahweh. Such an action was conjectured by Graham,[1] and more recently has been asserted openly by Widengren.[2] It is further suggested that the royal involvement in the fertility cult underlies much of the anti-monarchical sentiment encountered in the Biblical texts.[3]

Where, however, are the texts which show the king engaged in hierogamic ritual? The fruitless encounter of David and Abishag hints at the question of the old king's virility and consequent right to rule,[1] but it certainly bears none of the marks of a Sacred Marriage. Psalm 45, on the other hand, clearly refers to a royal marriage,[2] and even seems at one point to address the king as a god.[3] Bentzen declares himself "inclined to connect it with the _hieros gamos_,"[4] and Widengren proposes that it was the cultic nature of the royal wedding which won a place in the canon for this psalm.[5]

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[1] His discussion proceeded on the assumption that "the Hebrew kingship was a divine kingship, and that, in the dominant culture pattern, it was related to the ancient and wide-spread Tammuz-Ishtar myth" ("Isaiah's Part in the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis," AJSL, Vol. L, No. 4 [1934], p. 211). The issue of "sacral kingship" may only be touched upon. Hooke supposed that early opposition to the monarchy may have been rooted in Moses' revulsion against memories of the Egyptian court (MAR, pp. 11-12). Cf. Noth, Gesammelte Studien . . . , pp. 188-229, for the historical aspects of monarchical development. Bernhardt isolates three fundamental features of "sacral kingship": (1) the identity of god and king, (2) the king as an object of a cultus, and (3) the power of the king over the forces of nature. Neither in the historical books nor in the Psalter, he contends, are these elements attested in Israel (AKAT, p. 304).

[2] See above, p. 199.

[3] "Eben diese intime Verbindung der Königsinstitution mit dem Fruchtbarkeitsritual erklärt die antiroyalistische Einstellung mehrerer alttestamentlicher Texte, vor allem Richt. 9 (Jotams Fabel), 1. Sam. 8 und der Bücher der Könige" (Asmussen, ST, XI, 1, p. 168). Although it is certainly true that this issue figures prominently in the editorial verdicts rendered in Kings (cf. I Kgs. 15:12; 16:30-33; II Kgs. 16:1-4; 18:1-5; 21:1-9), it is difficult to see how it plays any part in Jotham's Fable or in Samuel's warning against the monarchy.

Against such an analysis it is argued that the poem seems to deal rather with a particular historical wedding celebration,[6] being either a secular nuptial ode[1] or a prophetic oracle[2] delivered on that occasion. This interpretation seems quite sufficient to account for most of the elements in the psalm, since any royal wedding would constitute a state event of great consequence for the entire realm, and therefore be likely to elicit such accolades and prophecies.

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[1] I Kgs. 1:1-4. At least this may be the meaning of Adonijah's action in vs. 5. Snaith suggests that the incident is "in line with a custom of our own time, such as is told in H. C. Armstrong's _Lord of Arabia_, where Ibn Saud restored the wavering allegiance of his Arabs by taking a virgin from a neighboring village, and consummating the marriage there and then, in spite of a deep flesh wound in the thigh. He consummated the marriage in the midst of the camp to show that he was not unmanned, and ordered all the camp to celebrate the occasion" (_The Jewish New Year Festival_, p. 219).

[2] Gaster argues for a secular wedding, on the grounds that "in the Near East, as elsewhere, it is common convention to treat the bridal couple as royalty" ("Psalm 45," _JBL_, Vol. LXXIV, No. 4 [1955], p. 239).

[3] Ps. 45:6. "Interpreters have tried in vain to explain it away" (Hammershaimb, _ST_, III, 2, p. 131). Stamm terms it "die einzige den König als Gott anredende Stelle" (_VT_, IV, p. 29). Cf. Kraus, _Psalmen_, I, p. 331, n. i, for a brief discussion of the proposed emendations. In any case God and the king are clearly distinguished elsewhere in the poem (cf. vss. 2, 7, 17).

[4] _Introduction to the Old Testament_ (3rd ed.; Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1957), Vol. I, p. 129, n. 4.

[5] _SK_, p. 78.

[6] Cf. Gordis, _Song of Songs_, p. 20; Kraus, _Gottesdienst . . ._, p. 260.

Even if the divine salutation to the king is allowed to stand, it remains outside the context of the marital allusions. The stability of the throne and the joy of the occasion constitute a divine blessing, which flows in response to the king's justice, rather than as the outcome of his connubium.[3] Moreover, since there is no hint that the royal bride represents a goddess,[4] it seems hardly possible to characterize the wedding as a celebration of the hieros gamos.

The role of the king in the Song of Songs will be considered subsequently in a full discussion of that document.[5] One need only note here that since the Song is quite innocent of any reference to Yahweh, there are no grounds for supposing that the king intended to represent him.

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[1] Robert H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), p. 619.

[2] Mowinckel, Psalms . . ., II, p. 61.

[3] Cf. Ps. 45:6, 7.

[4] This lack was either overlooked or slurred over by H. G. May when he offered this Psalm as evidence that "the king and queen [did] participate in these rites as god and goddess" ("The Fertility Cult in Hosea," AJSL, Vol. XLVII, No. 2 [1932], p. 89).

[5] See below, pp. 246-48.

To the foregoing specific analyses may be added the general consideration of priestly and prophetic silence.[1] It is hard to see how the supposition that the king embodied Yahweh in the cult could have escaped condemnation.[2] It seems far more reasonable to infer that such a role was never essayed.[3]

Prostitutes and hierodules

The quest for the female representative of the goddess has meanwhile turned naturally to the phenomenon of cultic prostitution. This type of activity, it is asserted, was one "by which the individual associated himself with the divine procreative act supposed to effect the annual rebirth of nature."[4] The present writer is unaware of any ancient Syro-Palestinian text which describes such an annual mythical "act,"[5] to say nothing of implicating it with the intent or outcome of sacred prostitution. It may also be observed that several of the Hebrew writers interpreted the failure of fertility as due to the heterodox cultic activities of their countrymen.[1]

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[1] See above, p. 219.

[2] "If in the cult the king had actually been made God, it would be most strange that, for instance, Ezekiel, who makes so many accusations against the kings of Judah (Ezk. 17; 19; 34) should not also have accused the king of making himself God; but the worst sacrilege of which Ezekiel can find the kings guilty is their having placed their graves close to the Temple, thus defiling the house of Yahweh (Ezk. 43.7ff.)" (Mowinckel, Psalms . . ., I, p. 243).

[3] "In Israel we find no trace of the representation of the fortunes of Yahweh by the king" (Mowinckel, He That Cometh, p. 82).

[4] Lods, Israel: from its Beginnings to the Middle of the Eighth Century, trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932), p. 409. Cf. Baumgartner, TZ, III, 2, p. 97; George A. F. Knight, Hosea: Introduction and Commentary (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1960), pp. 18-19.

[5] See above, p. 163, n. 3, for Gordon's contention that the "crisis" of fertility did not occur annually in Syro-Palestine.

Nonetheless it is further argued that this renewal of fecundity was accomplished through the Sacred Marriage, which cultic prostitution presupposed and imitated:

> Nun ist es wohl wichtig zu unterstreichen, dass diese Sexualpraktiken eben die heilige Ehe des Gottes zur Voraussetzung hatten. Die Verehrer ahmten im Kultus die Götterehe nach, ebenso wie sie überhaupt am Heiligtum die grossen Taten des Gottes miterlebten.[2]

If this were demonstrable, the female role-player in the *hieros gamos* might be identified with any hierodule. To what extent do the Biblical texts support this pattern of interpretation?

Two terms--*qᵉdešā* and *zônā*--are used primarily to designate prostitutes in the Hebrew Scriptures. The former would seem more promising for the present quest, since it is derived from a root which implies "holiness,"[3] and can be linked with cognate terms in other cultures.[4]

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[1] Deut. 11:16-17; Jer. 3:2-3; Hos. 2:12-13; Amos 4:7-8.

[2] Widengren, *SK*, pp. 77-78. "Die Paarung der am Heiligtum anwesenden Menschen sollte die eheliche Verbindung der beiden Götter fördern und die Fruchtbarkeit des Landes erneuern" (Victor Maag, "Syrien-Palästina," *Kulturgeschichte . . .*, ed. Schmökel, p. 595). Cf. Graham and May, *Culture and Conscience*, p. 95; Hooke, *The Siege Perilous*, pp. 181-82; von Rad, *Theologie*, I, p. 31; Wolff, *Hosea*, p. 46.

[3] Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs (eds.), *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: based on the Gesenius Lexicon* (Boston: Houghton, 1906), p. 873b.

[4] The Accadian parallel is *qadishtu* (Dhorme, *Les religions . . .*, p. 213).

The qᵉdešā occurs in only three Biblical passages, however,[1] two of which seem to equate her with the zônā.[2]

The latter root implies the act of fornication,[3] and is used both literally of cult prostitutes[4] and allegorically of departures from the pure worship of Yahweh.[5] It certainly cannot be demonstrated that "the zonah was a distinctly religious prostitute,"[6] since the term is also employed in contexts which display no obvious cultic associations.[7] That the 'ætnăn received by the zônā for her services is to be equated with Gudea's wedding gifts[8] is an assumption which would turn every such exchange of goods and services into a cultic act.

The simplest evaluation of the evidence is that the Hebrews did not distinguish clearly between the two terms for "prostitute."[9] Brooks offers the hypothesis that "since the root [znh] is so frequently used as a verb meaning to have relations with foreign gods, the zonoth probably were devotees of the baal cult, while the *qedeshoth* may have been indigenous in the earlier religion of the Hebrews."[1] The evidence seems insufficient to render a confident judgment on this proposal.

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[1] Gen. 38:21, 22; Deut. 23:17; Hos. 4:14.

[2] Cf. Gen 38:15, 24; Hos. 4:13-14.

[3] Brown, et al., Lexicon, p. 275b. [4] Deut. 23:18; Hos. 4:14.

[5] Is. 1:21; Jer. 2:20; Ez. 16:15; Hos. 4:15; Micah 1:7; passim.

[6] May, AJSL, XLVII, 2, p. 89.

[7] Gen. 34:31; Jos. 2:1; Jud. 16:1; I Kgs. 3:16.

[8] May, AJSL, XLVII, 2, p. 92. With regard to Gudea and the significance of such offerings, see above, pp. 47, 67-69.

[9] So Graham and May, Culture and Conscience, pp. 94-95; A. Douglas Tushingham, "A Reconsideration of Hosea, Chapters 1-3," JNES, Vol. XII, No. 3 (1953), p. 157; Asmussen, ST, XI, 1, p. 181. See above, pp. 79-80.

There are several aspects of the extant references to the *qᵉdešôt*/*zônôt* which obstruct their identification as participants in the Sacred Marriage. The most crucial is the absence of any reference to them in direct connection either with a goddess, or with the female cult symbol (*'ašerā*) so frequently condemned in the Biblical writings.[2] On the occasions of the cultic reforms of Asa[3] and Josiah,[4] it is only the expulsion of the "male cult prostitutes" (*qᵉdešîm*) which is reported, leaving the reader to infer that their female counterparts are intended by implication in the masculine plural form.[5]

To the assertion that consort with the *qᵉdešôt*/*zônôt* itself constituted the *hieros gamos*, it may further be objected that the occasions described include wayside encounters[6] and visits to houses,[7] but never an annual festival. Moreover, since the king is not to be found in any of these passages, it is difficult to link them with state celebrations.

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[1] *JBL*, LX, 3, p. 238.

[2] Deut. 16:21; Jud. 6:25; I Kgs. 16:33; II Kgs. 21:7.

[3] I Kgs. 15:11-14.

[4] II Kgs. 23:4-20.

[5] It is recorded in Josiah's time that in the "houses" of the *qᵉdešîm* "women wove hangings for the Asherah" (II Kgs. 23:7). These are often associated with the "gaily decked shrines" (*bamôt* *tᵉlu'ôt*) of Ez. 16:16, where, however, no reference is made to the Asherah.

[6] Gen. 38:12-19.

[7] Jer. 5:7.

In summary it seems that here, as in the Mesopotamian remains,[1] the evidence points at most to a form of individual devotion at the shrines, rather than to the event envisaged in the "patternist" concept of the Sacred Marriage.[2]

Festival Occasions

Even to those already convinced that the hieros gamos was once celebrated at an annual Hebrew festival, the Biblical documents yield only fragmentary and mostly cryptic materials for the reconstruction of such an event. Two such references are commonly associated.

The dance of the virgins

Norman Snaith once named the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter[3] and the rape of the daughters of Shiloh[4] as "two instances of folk dances celebrated by virgins only."[5] Since in the case of Jephthah's daughter, it is her death before marriage which is bewailed, this annual observance can hardly have provided the context for a ritual hierogamy. The "yearly feast of the Lord at Shiloh," on the other hand, was clearly connected on at least one occasion with connubial activity:

> And they commanded the Benjaminites, saying, "Go and lie in wait in the vineyards, and watch; if the daughters of Shiloh come

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[1] See above, p. 80 and n. 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 23.

[3] Jud. 11:37-40.

[4] Jud. 21:19-21.

[5] Snaith, "The Song of Songs: The Dances of the Virgins," AJSL, Vol. L, No. 3 (1934), p. 137. In fact, neither text expressly identifies the young women as b^{e}tûlôt.

> out to dance in the dances, then come out of the vineyards and seize each man his wife from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.[1]

This passage is frequently associated with a statement in the Mishnah, to the effect that it was customary on the 15th of Ab and at the close of the Day of Atonement for the maidens of Jerusalem to go out and dance in the vineyards, apparently in order that the young men might observe them and select their brides.[2]

These traces of a marital theme have led some interpreters to suggest that "originally . . . the dances must have had a cultic or ritual purpose," derived from the probability that they "were borrowed in Israel at a very early date from a foreign pagan source."[3] If Mesopotamia is conjectured as that source, "the dances may have been originally in honor of the divine wedding."[4] Or, if it is rather true that the dances had their origin in "ancient Canaanite days," then it may be speculated that they "often, if not generally" culminated "in scenes of gross license," of which the Hebrew dances "were merely a mild survival."[5] In such a case, either the dances themselves[6] or the (conjectural) ensuing sexual orgy are said to be "of homeopathic magical character, designed to promote the fruitfulness of the fields."[1]

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[1] Jud. 21:20-21.

[2] Taᶜanith IV, 8.

[3] M. H. Segal, "The Song of Songs," VT, Vol. XII, No. 4 (1962), pp. 487-88.

[4] Ibid., p. 488. Where is the evidence for such dances in connection with the Sacred Marriage in Mesopotamia?

[5] Morgenstern, "Two Ancient Israelite Agricultural Festivals," Jewish Quarterly Review, N.S., Vol. VIII (1917-18), pp. 51-52.

[6] "Man wünschte durch diese Tänze, die Lebenskraft der Tiere und Menschen aufrechtzuerhalten oder zu erneuern" (Asmussen, ST, XI, 1, p. 172). One wishes again and again that the authors of such statements

Against these interpretations it may at least be urged that the passage in Judges 21 in no way suggests that the carrying-off of the brides was an annual affair,[2] nor does it provide any insight whatsoever into the reason for the dancing. Even on this one occasion there is no suggestion that sexual union took place on the spot, let alone that it was engaged in for purposes of ensuring fertility. These extrapolations are purely speculative, and would therefore appear to offer no real evidence that a context has been found in which the Hebrews might once have celebrated the Sacred Marriage.

It is quite possible that the dancing in Judges may have been associated with the Feast of Booths,[3] and to that subject the discussion will therefore turn.

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would tell the reader how they think they have come by their information! See above, pp. 7-8.

[1] Morgenstern, "The Despoiling of the Egyptians," JBL, Vol. LXVIII, No. 1 (1949), p. 10. The author arrives at this point by adopting an opinion of Josephus that the rape of Dinah (Gen. 34:1f.) occurred at a Shechemite festival (ibid., p. 9). Even granting this identification, Shechem's action hardly justifies the assertion that "sexual unions between young men and virgin maidens . . . [were] a part of the celebration of major agricultural festivals" (ibid., pp. 9-10). Gaster, in his discussion of a "seasonal rite of sexual promiscuity," suggests that "a similar explanation may apply" to the story in Jud. 21:19-23 (Thespis, p. 41).

[2] Contra Pedersen, who avers that "the rape itself must have been part of the cult" (Israel, III-IV, p. 419).

[3] "If (as it seems) the story records an ancient tradition, then it must refer to the feast of Tents" (de Vaux, Ancient Israel, p. 496).

Booths and nuptial chambers

It is primarily the "booths" themselves which have provoked an hierogamic interpretation of the festival. The texts identify it as a harvest celebration,[1] marked by a joyful, expansive mood.[2] The only express description of the booths is post-exilic, but claims Mosaic provenance:

> And they found it written in the law that the Lord had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, and that they should publish and proclaim in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim.[3]

As to what might have been done in the sukkôt, there is no hint at all; the reader learns only that the people lived in them for seven days.[4] The notion that the booths were the scene of sexual activity depends entirely on their conjectural identification with a "sacred grove,"[5] or with some other cultic structure, such as the Mesopotamian gigunu:

> In his discussion of the meaning of gigunu, Mr. Sidney Smith has shown good grounds for supposing that the gigunu was a chamber used for the ritual of the sacred marriage. Hence it is

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[1] Lev. 23:39; Deut. 16:13.

[2] Deut. 16:14; Neh. 8:17.

[3] Neh. 8:14-16.

[4] Lev. 23:42.

[5] "We venture to suggest that the 'booth' originally represented the sacred grove in which the divine marriage was consummated" (Oesterley, MAR, p. 140). One wishes that the author had identified the "grove" he had in mind, so that this alleged symbolism could be evaluated.

> permissible for us to suppose that the original significance of the booths of greenery was connected with the ritual of the sacred marriage.[1]

Smith's article argued, in fact, that "it must not be assumed that a *gigunu* was always built of cedar, or was always cloaked in greenery; it may have been."[2] Indeed the burden of the essay was the author's contention that the word *gigunu* was sometimes applied to a subterranean chamber,[3] and therefore that both it and the *hieros gamos* might have been involved in the royal tombs discovered at Ur.[4] All of this was apparently overlooked or underestimated by Prof. Hooke in his eagerness to identify a hierogamic prototype of the Hebrew *sukkôt*. In any case, as Frankfort observed, "the decoration of the divine bridal chamber with greenery does not explain why the whole population went to live in booths made of leafy boughs for seven days at the Feast of Tabernacles."[5]

There is no evidence, finally, of any divine activity in connection with these booths. Oesterley wanted to suppose that Jahweh was thought of as inhabiting a *sukkā* of his own at the feast, on the evidence of the following passages from the Psalter:

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[1] Hooke, *Origins . . .*, p. 54. Raphael Patai cites Oesterley (see preceding note) and Hooke, without attempting to "probe into the tenability of this view" (*Man and Temple: In Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual* [New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1947], pp. 89; 103, n. 113). He seems favorably inclined, nonetheless, for he proceeds to seek traces of "the sexual principle in the Temple" in "rabbinic similes and legends" (*ibid.*, pp. 89-90).

[2] *JRAS* (1928), 4, p. 852.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 853. Frankfort was dubious about the double use of the word, being inclined to restrict it to a structure on the ziggurat (*Kingship*, pp. 411-12, n. 78). So also Van Buren, *Or*, N.S., XIII, p. 45.

[4] Smith, *JRAS* (1928), 4, pp. 867-68. See above, p. 63.

[5] *Problem . . .*, p. 8.

> His abode [*sukkô*] has been established in Salem,
> his dwelling place in Zion.[1]
>
> For he will hide me in his shelter [*b^{e}sukkō*] in the day of trouble.[2]

Widengren comments: "Obviously Yahweh at the Feast of Booths, Sukkōth, like His worshippers had an arbour, *sukkāh*, to dwell in."[3]

Since none of the historical texts make any reference to such a divine habitation at the feast, which in turn is alluded to in neither of these Psalms, it is difficult to recognize anything "obvious" in this deduction. In addition to the hut, in any case, one must also conjecture a goddess and some reference to divine sexual congress, since neither are provided by any existing text. In short, if the Feast of Booths was the occasion of a Sacred Marriage, substantive evidence of that fact is no longer preserved in the canonical records.

Is Canticles a Ritual Text?

One Biblical document still remains to be examined. Few if any others can claim a more varied exegetical history.[4] The present study will confine itself to the possibilities and problems raised by the assertion that it includes materials which once were part of a hierogamic liturgy.

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[1] Ps. 76:2.

[2] Ps. 27:5a, "which there is reason to connect with this feast" (Oesterley, *MAR*, p. 136, n. 2).

[3] *MRAK*, p. 182.

[4] Cf. Max Haller's brief summary of the "allegorische," "dramatische," "profan-erotische," and "kultmythologische" approaches (*Die*

The cultic interpretation

None of the "cultic school" of interpreters goes so far as to claim that Canticles in its present form is a Sacred Marriage text. Even in Meek's early statement, the stress was on the persistence of an institution whose original meaning had been lost to memory. The Old Testament, he asserted, "is full of references" to "the early fertility cult which the Hebrews took over from the agricultural Canaanites."

> It is not surprising, therefore, to find the Hebrews engaged in fertility rites long after their original significance had been forgotten and it is quite to be expected that fragments of the original liturgies should have survived. Some of these are unquestionably to be found in Canticles.[1]

In a recent commentary based on a "considerably modified" version of this thesis, the same author comments that the book in time "became so secularized that it appears today as a simple anthology of love poems."[2]

Fünf Megilloth ["Handbuch zum Alten Testament," ed. Otto Eissfeldt, Vol. XVIII; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1940], pp. 23-25).

[1] "The Song of Songs and the Fertility Cult," The Song of Songs: A Symposium, ed. Wilfred H. Schoff (Philadelphia: The Commercial Museum, 1924), pp. 48-49. A decade later, Snaith wished to hedge still further, while yet accepting Meek's basic premise (AJSL, L, 3, pp. 130-31).

[2] IB, V, p. 95b. This statement is strikingly similar to one made a year after the publication of Meek's first study, by a scholar who rejected the cultic interpretation: "Whatever the characters once were, they are now all genuinely human and move entirely within the sphere of the present life. All older religious elements in the poem have thus

A similar development seems implicit in Schmökel's analysis: "Die Riten vergingen und die Mythen verblassten, der Text aber blieb."[1]

Reconstruction of the forgotten origins of Canticles has therefore depended on establishing its relationship to similar poetry surviving from neighboring cultures. A connection with Mesopotamian hierogamic texts might be considered especially conclusive, and was sought by Meek in the case of a catalog of Akkadian song titles.[2] The association of this tablet with Canticles is proposed on the basis of a series of literary similarities, such as the following:

> I am pressed to thy breast [Akkadian text].
>
> Oh that his left hand were under my head,
> and that his right hand embraced me! [Canticles 2:6][3]

It cannot be entirely certain that these Akkadian songs were actually hierogamic texts, since only their titles have survived. Hence whatever

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been, at least outwardly, secularized" (Leroy Waterman, "The Rôle of Solomon in the Song of Songs," JBL, Vol. XLIV, Nos. 1-2 [1925], pp. 182-83).

[1] ZAW, LXIV, 1, p. 155. "Es wird also dabei sein Bewenden haben müssen, das es profane Liebes- und Hochzeitslieder sind, wie alle Welt sie kennt und immer kennen wird, die wir im Hohenlied vor uns haben" (Eissfeldt, Einleitung . . ., p. 663).

[2] See above, p. 43.

[3] Meek, "Babylonian Parallels to the Song of Songs," JBL, Vol. XLIII, Nos. 3-4 (1924), p. 247. He generalizes: "The structure of the songs is the same (two lovers representing god and goddess wooing each other and alternating in the praise of each other's charms)" (ibid., p. 252). To this Nathaniel Schmidt responded: "But there is no hint in Canticles of either a god or a goddess, and lovers are wont to praise each other's charms" ("Is Canticles an Adonis Litany?," JAOS, Vol. XLVI, No. 2 [1926], p. 158). On the presence of divine figures, see below, pp. 244-46; on the ubiquity of amorous imagery, see p. 238.

significance may be attributed to such similarities in language, they hardly suffice in themselves to brand Canticles as the liturgy for a hieros gamos.

The case might be more convincing if it could be made concerning one of the songs addressed to Šu-Sin,[1] as Helmer Ringgren has sought to do.[2] He also proceeds on the basis of "stilistische und inhaltliche Ähnlichkeit": "Der Wunsch, in die Bettkammer geführt zu werden, klingt an HL 1 4 an: 'Möge der König mich in seine Kammer führen.'"[3] While such parallels may suggest a general congruity of theme, they hardly seem extensive enough to establish identity of purpose. Nonetheless, such a relationship cannot be ruled out, especially as it has won the backing of no less an authority than S. N. Kramer.[4]

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[1] See above, p. 51.

[2] "Hohes Lied und hieros gamos," ZAW, Vol. LXV, Nos. 3-4 (1953), pp. 300-302.

[3] "Wenn Z. 5, 7 'You have captivated me' richtig übersetzt ist, wäre damit etwa HL 4 9 'Du hast mich behext (erregt)' zu vergleichen. Zu Z. 19, 21 'sleep in our house until dawn' wäre auf HL 1 17 ('unser Haus') und 2 17, 4 6 ('bis der Tag. d. i. der Morgenwind weht') hinzuweisen" (ibid., p. 301). It must be questioned, however, whether a line put together from contextually separate verses is even a literary parallel.

[4] "The love songs of which the Biblical book, 'Song of Songs' is composed, must originally have been cultic in character" (Expedition, V, 1, p. 31). What he really wants to contend for is the priority of Sumerian culture: "There is little doubt that not a few of the expressions, implications, situations, and allusions in the Biblical masterpiece go back to Sumerian literary sources" (ibid.). Cf. also W. G. Lambert, who seeks to compose a Babylonian parallel out of three separate cuneiform fragments: "A matter which can hardly escape notice is the similarity of the problems presented by our text to those of the Song of Songs. Both are love poetry with no apparent sequence or development. In both

It has also been suggested that parallels to some of the expressions in Canticles are to be found in Egyptian love poetry.[1]

> I am unto thee like a garden, which I have planted with flowers and with all manner of sweet smelling herbs.
>
> Pleasant is the channel in it, which thine hand hath digged, at the cooling of the north wind. The beautiful place where I walk about, when thine hand resteth on mine, and mine heart is satisfied with joy, because we walk together.[2]

> A garden locked is my sister, my bride,
>   a garden locked, a fountain sealed.
> . . . .
> Awake, O north wind, and come, O south wind!
> Blow upon my garden, let its fragrance be wafted abroad.
> Let my beloved come to his garden,
>   and eat its choicest fruits.[3]

Since ancient hierogamic liturgies have not so far been recovered in Egypt,[4] the similarities with Egyptian love songs would appear to have a

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there is a frequent change of speaker, and at times narrative or monologue occurs. In both the scene changes, and the lovers appear to have left their metropolitan environment" (JSS, IV, 1, p. 7).

[1] "There is much clearer evidence of [Egyptian] influence elsewhere, particularly in the Wisdom books and in the Song of Songs" (Bell, Cults and Creeds . . ., p. 26). "The resemblance of these songs to the Song of Songs will strike every reader, and a connection is favoured by another feature also, namely, that the lovers call themselves there as here 'brother' and 'sister'" (Erman, Literature . . ., pp. 242-43).

[2] Ibid., pp. 248-49.

[3] Cant. 4:12, 16. This particular comparison is proposed by Bell, Cults and Creeds . . ., pp. 26-27).

[4] See above, pp. 149-52. Franz Rolf Schröder suggests, but does not carry out, "die Zurückführung der ägyptischen Liebeslyrik des Neuen Reiches auf ältere religiös-erotische Lieder und Hymnen" ("Sakrale Grundlagen der altägyptischen Lyrik," Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, Vol. XXV, No. 3 [1951], p. 274). "Aber dies zu entscheiden muss ich Berufeneren überlassen" (ibid., p. 282).

neutralizing effect on the evidential value of the alleged Mesopotamian parallels.[1]

Neither set of comparisons is entirely convincing to the present writer. While it is perfectly possible that "culture-diffusion" may be traced in these literary resemblances, a simpler analysis would also seem to suffice. It may be argued that essentially the same artistic vocabulary must be employed in the portrayal of love, whether human or divine.[2] On this basis, the language of Canticles may never have referred to anything other than human love,[3] allowing for the additional possibility of stylistic interaction with cultic love poetry.[4]

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[1] "Another counter-indication [to the cultic interpretation of Canticles] may be seen in the similarities it shows with old Egyptian and modern Arabic love-songs" (Walter Baumgartner, "The Wisdom Literature," *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. Rowley, p. 234).

[2] "The allegedly mythical references are often sought out as if there were no such thing as ordinary love-making and love-words" (*ibid.*).

[3] So Morris Jastrow, *The Song of Songs: Being A Collection of Love Lyrics of Ancient Palestine* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1921), p. 11; Pfeiffer, *Introduction . . .*, p. 711; H. Wheeler Robinson, *Two Hebrew Prophets: Studies in Hosea and Ezekiel* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1948), p. 19; Gordis, *Song of Songs*, p. x. This view seems to represent something of a daring departure from the norm for Catholic exegetes, who are at some pains to interpret the imagery within the limits of legitimate courtship and marriage. Cf. Jean-Paul Audet, "Le sens du Cantique des Cantiques," *RB*, Vol. LXII, No. 2 (1955), p. 215; de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 34. See also above, p. 194, n. 1.

[4] Within this context, it may reasonably be contended that "the similarity [of Canticles] to marriage songs is more likely due to the fact that the marriage ceremony drew much from the rites of the fertility cult" (Meek, "Canticles and the Tammuz Cult," *AJSL*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1 [1922], p. 8). It seems even more cogent, however, to argue "dass der Dichter, der Götterliebe und Götterhochzeit besingt, seine Ausdrucksmittel naturgemäss den irdischen Verhältnissen, also dem menschlichen Liebeslied, entnehmen muss" (W. Rudolph, "Das Hohe Lied im Kanon," *ZAW*,

Inclusion in the canon

A "profan-erotische" understanding of Canticles would certainly have prevented its canonization,[1] which is now generally attributed to the assumption of Solomonic authorship, coupled with orthodox allegorization.[2] Meek asserts that the latter interpretation of the Song "could only have grown out of its cultic use."[3] Such a statement is elusively vague: one wishes to know more precisely what is meant by "cultic use," and when such "growth" is supposed to have taken place. Surely if even the reputation of Canticles' employment in a fertility ritual had been alive during the final formulation of the canon, it would have been excluded.[4] Indeed, it is difficult to see how such an understanding or use could have maintained itself within the official cult at any time

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Vol. LIX, Nos. 1-4 [1942/43], p. 192). Even if it is supposed that some of the imagery in Canticles has been drawn from hierogamic texts, "it might explain the literary antecedences of the Song, but would not necessarily testify to the actual existence of the cult on Palestinian soil" (Gaster, Thespis, p. 417, n. 30). In general agreement with this analysis cf. also Hvidberg, Weeping and Laughter, p. 148; Rowley, "The Song of Songs: An Examination of Recent Theory," JRAS (1938), No. 2, p. 273; Bentzen, Introduction . . ., Appendix, p. 7; Eissfeldt, Einleitung . . ., pp. 662-63.

[1] Cf. Gordis, Song of Songs, pp. 8-10, for an account of Jewish and Christian contention against the literal understanding of the book.

[2] Ibid., p. 43.

[3] IB, V, p. 96b.

[4] So Rudolph, ZAW, LIX, 1-4, pp. 191-92; Gordis, Song of Songs, p. 43; Bentzen, Introduction . . ., I, pp. 131-32; Helmer Ringgren and Artur Weiser, Das Hohe Lied, Klagelieder, Das Buch Esther ("Das Alte Testament Deutsch," ed. Volkmar Herntrich and Artur Weiser, Vol. XVI, No. 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), pp. 3-4.

during the post-exilic period.[1]

Something would certainly be gained by an early identification of Canticles with a Hebrew festival,[2] thus providing a context within which popular esteem for the scroll might have developed side by side with its allegorical interpretation. It may well be that such a sequence of events did conspire to make its canonization virtually unavoidable, as Schmökel has contended.[3] Under such circumstances, however, one would also be forced to conclude that the Song's incorporation into the Yahwism of this period made its use as a hierogamic text quite unthinkable.[4]

The form in which the book finally took its place in the canon has prompted efforts at radical rearrangement of the present sequence of verses. Though this approach has not been confined to the cultic interpreters,[1] its use has been justified by them on the grounds that the needs of canonization called forth extensive editorializing at the hands of "jüdischen Theologen."[2] The persuasiveness of this accusation is seriously undermined by the complete failure of the alleged editors to endow the Song with any trace of Yahwistic piety or practice.[3]

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[1] Cf. Rowley, JRAS (1938), 2, p. 259; F. Horst, Review of Heilige Hochzeit und Hoheslied, by Hartmut Schmökel, ThLZ, Vol. LXXXIII, No. 3 (1958), col. 185.

[2] "From Masseketh Sopherim 14:3, 18, we know that when that was written in the eighth century, the Song was used liturgically by being read on the eighth day of the Passover celebration at the beginning of the new year. Exactly when this custom had its origin we cannot say, but there is every indication that it harks back to time immemorial" (Meek, IB, V, p. 91b).

[3] "Das Hohelied war als Text bäuerlich-dörflicher Frühlingsfeiern unausrottbar; es galt bis in die letzten Tage des palästinischen Judentums als heilig und zusammengehörig, so dass man es weder zerpflücken noch beiseiteschieben konnte" (ZAW, LXIV, 1, p. 151).

[4] Bentzen carries this argument back still further: "It is not easy to understand how and when poems of this kind have been preserved in the passover ritual in spite of the strong anti-Canaanite reaction of the 9th-6th centuries. We have here to count upon too many uncontrollable intermediate links. . . . The truth of the cultic interpretation concerns their pre-history" (Introduction . . ., II, p. 182).

Since Schmökel's reconstruction of the Song is so integral to his interpretation,[4] the outline of his reorganization should at least be recorded. He divides the revised sequence into three "scenes":

> I. 8:13; 6:10, 5a; 1:5-6; 6:1; 6:2; 6:11f.; 3:1-2; 5:7; 3:4; 5:2-6; 3:3; 5:8; 5:9; 5:10-16; 1:7; 1:8; 8:1-2.
>
> II. 4:8; 8:5a; 8:5b-7; 7:7-10; 2:10b-14; 2:17; 4:9-11; 2:16; 6:4, 5b-9; 6:3; 4:1-5, 7; 7:11.
>
> III. 3:6-11; 7:1-6; 1:9-14; 2:1-3; 4:12-5:1; 2:8-9; 7:12-14; 2:6-7; 1:2-4; 3:5; 2:4-5; 8:3-4; 1:16-17.[5]

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[1] Cf. Leroy Waterman, *The Song of Songs: Translated and Interpreted as a Dramatic Poem* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1948), pp. 41-58.

[2] "Und nun folgte die kunstvolle Arbeit am Text des Buches, das alsbald durch Umstellung, Streichungen, Zusätze, Umdeutungen und dogmatische Korrekturen im weitesten Sinne seines ursprünglichen Charakters entkleidet und zu einer für die Kanonisierung tragbaren Form verharmlost wurde" (Schmökel, *ZAW*, LXIV, 1, p. 151).

[3] "We look in vain in the song for any real indication of the Yahweh cult. . . . Surely this was a strange revision, which left traces of the rejected cult everywhere in the book, but which left the new cult unmentioned" (Rowley, *JRAS* [1938], 2, p. 261).

[4] He terms it "der einzige Weg zum Verständnis des rätselreichen Büchleins" (*Heilige Hochzeit und Hoheslied* ["Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes," ed. Hans Robert Roemer, Vol. XXXII, No. 1; Wiesbaden: Deutsche Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1956], p. 47).

[5] *Heilige Hochzeit . . .*, pp. 45-47.

The present writer simply submits that so radical a re-ordering of the materials has sundered any reasonable connection with the historical document.[1] Such a step might be justified, had the author been able to put forward another ancient text as the pattern for his reconstruction. In the absence of such an extant prototype, his efforts seem to prove little more than the possibility of rearranging ancient materials to bring them into conformity with modern abstractions.[2]

Alleged vestiges of the fertility cult

An analysis of every feature in the Song which has been identified as cultic would consume a separate treatise approaching the length of the present one.[3] This study will be confined to those elements relating most directly to the possibility that a Sacred Marriage text lies at hand.

Nonetheless, the variety of words and phrases alleged to be cultic ought at least to be indicated. Among those so interpreted have been

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[1] "Schm. gewinnt seine Liturgiethese durch ein Auseinandernehmen und andersartiges Zusammensetzen des bestehenden Textgefüges. Dabei bleiben bisweilen Stücke vereint, deren gattungsgemässige Zusammengehörigkeit fraglich erscheinen kann, und andere, die formal eine Einheit bilden, werden aus szenarischen Gründen zerlegt" (Horst, *ThLZ*, LXXXIII, 3, col. 185).

[2] One might add, whimsically, that the "credits" for the scenario in this form ought to read: "Newly adapted for cultic use by Hartmut Schmökel."

[3] The outer limits of the task would seem to have been drawn by Schmökel: "Von dem nach unserer Aufteilung 41 Teiltexten des Hohenliedes, das als Kunstdichtung einheitlichen Ursprungs erkannt wurde, sind lediglich drei ganz kurze Strophen als rein weltlich auszuscheiden und nur acht mit einiger Mühe profan deutbar" (*ZAW*, LXIV, 1, p. 152).

"green,"[1] "lily,"[2] "apple tree,"[3] "raisins" and "apples,"[4] "hinds" and "gazelles,"[5] "pomegranate,"[6] and "sixty queens and eighty concubines."[7]

Such identifications may be challenged on the grounds that these terms were also employed apart from any ritual associations.[8] Insistence that the cultic meanings lie behind the ordinary ones really constitutes a revival of the allegorical method, as several opponents of the cultic interpretation have charged.[1] The introduction of this principle renders any sort of scientific control exceedingly difficult, and must leave the results open to continued debate.[2] In extreme forms, this approach to the data may even deserve Rowley's satirical interpretation of Psalm 23 as a Tammuz liturgy.[3]

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[1] Cant. 1:16. "The word . . . is regularly used to describe the sacred tree that was a feature of the Baal cult" (Meek, _IB_, V, p. 111). But see Ps. 52:8; Jer. 11:16.

[2] Cant. 2:1. Meek traces it to the Coptic word for "lotus," and comments: "It is of interest to note that the commonest type of Astarte figurines represents the naked goddess carrying the lotus as her symbol" (_ibid._, p. 112).

[3] Cant. 2:3. "Trees like the apple, cedar, cypress, and palm are everywhere connected with the vegetation cult" (_ibid._, p. 113). "Der Apfelbaum hier wie in 8,5 nicht zufällig erwähnt ist, sondern als heiliger Baum bzw. heilige Frucht in den Tammuzkreis gehört" (Schmökel, _Heilige Hochzeit . . ._, pp. 102-103).

[4] Cant. 2:5. Meek, _IB_, V, p. 114; Ringgren, _Hohe Lied . . ._, p. 11. "Apfel sind weitverbreitetes erotisches symbol, auch für den Phallus" (Haller, _Die Fünf Megilloth_, p. 29).

[5] Cant 2:7. "Die Beschwörung erfolgt nicht bei einer Gottheit, sondern bie den 'Hinden und Gazellen,' den heiligen Tieren der Liebes--göttin" (_ibid._). Cf. Meek, _IB_, V, p. 114; Schmokel, _Heilige Hochzeit_, p. 110.

[6] Cant. 4:3. It "owes its connection with the fertility cult to its numerous seeds, symbolic of fertility" (Meek, _IB_, V, p. 122).

[7] Cant. 6:8. "The cultic interpretation sees a reference to the votaries of the cult, with all the words strongly suggesting this" (_ibid._, p. 132). The cultic view is disputed, in this case, by Ringgren, _Hohe Lied . . ._, p. 29.

[8] Schmidt's challenge was absolute: "Almost everything that a couple of lovers would be likely to notice and mention in the spring under the Syrian sky is brought into connection with the Tammuz cult" (_JAOS_, XLVI, 2, p. 161). Rowley's disclaimer conceded more, yet still made the point; "The fact that these terms occur in relation to the Tammuz cult is no proof that they only had relation to that cult, or Tammuz is everywhere" (_JRAS_ [1938], 2, p. 266). See above, p. 238.

More soberly, if Canticles was once a Sacred Marriage text, it ought to retain some trace of the divine couple whose union it celebrated. The male deity cannot be Yahweh; none of his names, at any rate, ever appears in the book.[4] Indeed it has been contended that "there is no hint in Canticles of either a god or a goddess,"[5] and to the ordinary reader this claim would almost certainly appear just.

The cultic interpreters, however, detect the presence of the missing deity at two levels. Anonymous references to a "king" are made several times in the Song,[1] and "king is a common title of the fertility god in the Ras Shâmra texts, as elsewhere."[2] Furthermore, the god is frequently named, since the form "my beloved" (dôdî)[3] contains what "was originally the name of the Palestinian god of fertility, Dôdh."[4]

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[1] Cf. Pfeiffer, Introduction . . ., p. 715; Waterman, Song of Songs, p. 2; Gordis, Song of Songs, p. 4; Norman K. Gottwald, A Light to the Nations: An Introduction to the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959), p. 493.

[2] Meek admits that "on separate items the evidence may be slight, but the critics fail to note that it is cumulative" (IB, V, p. 96a). Cf. Widengren, with reference to the data assembled by Schmökel (SK, p. 112). It may be replied that the multiplication of inconclusive testimonies serves to compound uncertainty, rather than to establish proof.

[3] JRAS (1938), 2, p. 267. See above, pp. 24-25.

[4] Stressed by Dubarle, RB, LXI, 1, p. 83; Gordis, Song of Songs, p. 8; Bernhardt, AKAT, p. 272, n. 2; among others.

[5] See above, p. 235, n. 3.

The effective presence of this god in the Song has hardly been consistent, however. One reads in Meek's early statement that "when the liturgy was incorporated into the Yahweh cult, . . . Dod was identified with Yahweh."[5] More recently, the same writer has added that "later generations lost sight of the original meaning of the expression."[6] In short, the deity was first Dod, then Yahweh-called-Dod, then Dod/Yahweh-whose-identity-had-been-forgotten. There is no other Biblical record of either of the first two deities,[7] and the latter is no deity at all.[8]

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[1] Cant. 1:4, 12; 7:5.

[2] Meek, IB, V, p. 104. Cf. idem, JBL, XLIII, 3-4, p. 249; Haller, Die Fünf Megilloth, p. 29.

[3] Cant. 1:13, 14, 15, 16, passim.

[4] Meek, IB, V, p. 110; Haller, Die Fünf Megilloth, p. 27.

[5] Meek, The Song of Songs, ed. Schoff, p. 56.

[6] IB, V, p. 110. "In its present form . . . God never once appears in [the Song]" (ibid., p. 92a).

[7] For the second, Meek cites II Chr. 20:37 and Is. 5:1 (ibid., p. 96a). The former is an obscure proper name, and the proposition that Isaiah would have consciously used the name of a Canaanite fertility deity as a Yahwistic title seems quite unsupportable. "Actually, there is no real evidence for Dod as a divine name used in Israel" (Gordis, Song of Songs, p. 7, n. 30).

[8] Schmökel proposes that Canticles uses dôd "offensichtlich als

Hence this analysis has really added little or nothing to the quest for one of the constituent elements of a Hebrew hierogamy.

The evidence adduced for the presence of a goddess in the Song is equally evanescent. The term "Shulammite"[1] is said to be a degenerated form of the fertility goddess Shala, who "in course of time . . . came to be understood as a simple maiden."[2] Once again the reader is confronted with a deity attested nowhere else in the canonical books, and whose identity has in any case been forgotten at some point in the indefinite past.

Others have sought the presence of the royal role-players in the Sacred Marriage in the names of Solomon[3] and the Shulammite.[4] References

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Deckwort für Ištars Buhlen, und in der Tat ist er so den mannigfachen Zensuren, denen das HL bis zu seiner Kanonisierung ausgesetzt gewesen ist, entgangen" (Heilige Hochzeit . . ., p. 55).

[1] Cant. 6:13.

[2] Meek, Song of Songs, ed. Schoff, p. 57. Here he blamed this secularization on the fact that "when Solomon's name got attached to the book, the word was confused with 'the Shunammite' of I Kgs. 1:3" (ibid.). More recently, he has written that "the name Solomon in Hebrew is almost identical with the name of another fertility god, Shalem or Shulman, and Shulammite is simply the feminine form" (IB, V, p. 96b). Schmökel considers this conjecture to be linguistically unsound. "Nach dem bisher Erarbeiteten liegt die Annahme, dass das unerklärbare Wort eine Bezeichnung der Göttin verdeckt, nicht fern. Theorien sind bei Fehlen allen Beweismaterials billig" (Heilige Hochzeit . . ., p. 98).

[3] Cant. 3:7, 9, 11.

[4] "Nimmt man an, dass sich hier wie gewöhnlich ein religiöser Ritus zu Volkssitte entwickelt hat, so wird alles verständlich. Dann hat der König in Syrien mit seiner Königin wirklich einmal den Partner in der Götterhochzeit gespielt, und davon ist eine Erinnerung in der Rolle Salomos im Hohenliede erhalten geblieben" (Widengren, SK, p. 78). As Rowley has shown, however, "the view that Shulammith is the feminine of

to the "king" are adduced in support of this view,[1] though Meek has pointed out that "the girl is never named or treated as queen in the Song of Songs."[2] Presumably, then, she was a hierodule with whom the king ritually celebrated the divine nuptials.

It cannot be denied that passages in Canticles are strikingly reminiscent of Mesopotamian songs addressed to a king by a priestess.[3] Yet the assumption that Solomon or other Hebrew kings impersonated a god in a *hieros gamos* leaves one hard put to account for the absence of references to this action elsewhere in the canonical texts. Considering the critical reviews of royal behavior which are to be found among the works of the prophets and codifiers,[4] it seems especially unlikely that such

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Solomon . . . has also been found to be consistent with many other views of the Song" ("The Meaning of the Shulamite," *AJSL*, Vol. LVI, No. 1 [1939], pp. 88-89). Meek's view is somewhat difficult to determine. On Cant. 3:7, he comments: "If Solomon in this passage is not playing the role of the god in a festal procession, it is difficult to see how his name got into the text" (*IB*, V, p. 119). Only sentences later, he adds: "If our book is a liturgy, the name that stood here originally must have been Shelem, and it was changed to Solomon when the liturgy came to be adapted to the Jerusalem cultus" (*ibid.*, p. 120). [Was Shelem originally the name both of the god and of the king who played his role?] On Cant. 3:6-11, Ringgren observes: "Es gibt jedoch nichts, das andeutet, der König trete hier als Tammuz auf; es handelt sich vielmehr um eine symbolisch-mimische Prozession, über deren Zusammenhang mit einer Heiligen Hochzeit wir nur Vermutungen anstellen können" (*Das Hohe Lied . . .*, p. 17).

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 6; Meek, *IB*, V, p. 104.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 94a.

[3] See above, p. 51; cf. Cant. 1:4, 12, 13; 2:6; 8:2. But see also above, p. 238.

[4] Cf. Deut. 17:14-20; I Kgs. 11:1-8; 12:28-33; Jer. 2:26-27; 8:1-2; Ez. 43:6-9.

heterodox cultic activity would have escaped their condemnation.[1]

It is further contended that fertility is a frequent theme in Canticles, and again passages may be selected which do sound very similar to certain Mesopotamian hierogamic songs.[2] It remains debatable, however, that a verse such as the following one "would refer to the revival of life in nature on the reunion of god and goddess":[3]

> Let us go out early to the vineyards,
>   and see whether the vines have budded,
> whether the grape blossoms have opened
>   and the pomegranates are in bloom.
> There I will give you my love.[4]

It seems relatively clear in the foregoing passage that the budding and blossoming are an inspiration for making love, rather than its outcome.[5] The types of fecundity described in the Mesopotamian texts are far more comprehensive,[1] and also more expressly linked in a causal connection with the *hieros gamos*.[2]

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[1] "There is not the slightest indication that the kings and queens of Judah, or of Israel, represented Tammuz and Astarte at the Pesaḥ feast, and no trace of a protest against such a custom in the Deuteronomic law or the prophets" (Schmidt, JAOS, XLVI, 2, p. 163). See above, pp. 209, 219, 224.

[2] Compare Cant. 4:11-15 with the hymn to Baba quoted above on p. 49. Meek says of the former passage that "the original reference must assuredly have been to the Palestinian goddess of vegetation and life-giving rains" (The Song of Songs, ed. Schoff, p. 57). Cant. 5:1 also bears some similarity to the text reproduced above on pp. 86-87. Schmökel terms these verses "eine neue Anspielung auf die jungfräuliche Eigenschaft der Ištar, die die altorientalische Götterlehre ohne Bedenken mit jenem anderen Charakterzug der Liebesgöttin der Venus vulgivaga, zusammenstellt" (Heilige Hochzeit . . ., p. 104).

[3] Meek, IB, V, p. 139. Cf. Schmökel, Heilige Hochzeit . . ., p. 109.

[4] Cant. 7:12.

[5] "Le Cantique maintient la spécificité de la vie humaine en chantant l'amour personnel et non la fécondité" (Dubarle, RB, LXI, 1, p. 83).

Finally, some notice should be taken of the efforts to find a cultic interpretation for Canticles 1:16b-17:

> Our couch is green;
>   the beams of our house are cedar
>   our rafters are pine.

It is suggested that this description fits a *sukkā* at the Festival,[3] and/or that it is reminiscent of the Mesopotamian Sacred Marriage bower.[4] On the arguments already advanced above,[5] however, neither of these identifications can be made to demonstrate the presence of hierogamic elements in the Song.

General Evaluation of the Evidence

The notion of a *hieros gamos* in Israel has been founded by its proponents on such supposed testimonies as sexual symbolism in the prophetic writings, the association of Anath and Yahu in the Elephantine papyri, the occurrence of ritual prostitution, the annual practice of living in "booths," and the cultic interpretation of the Song of

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[1] See above, p. 87.   [2] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

[3] Meek, *IB*, V, p. 112; Widengren, *SK*, p. 78.

[4] "Es kann für uns kein Zweifel bestehen, dass es sich bei ihr um das göttliche, mit üppigem Frühlingsgrün ausgeschmückte Hochzeitsgemach handelte, von dem die sumerisch-babylonischen Texte zuweilen sprechen" (Schmökel, *Heilige Hochzeit . . .*, p. 114). Cf. Ringgren, *Das Hohe Lied . . .*, p. 10.

[5] See above, pp. 231-33.

Solomon.[1] What may be said concerning these various and fragmentary data?

This study has concluded, first, that Yahweh is nowhere clearly attested as the mate in a divine sexual act: neither in surviving mythical episodes,[2] nor in the allusions to the king's "divine filiation,"[3] nor in the marital imagery employed by the prophets.[4] The Elephantine evidence does not really even explain itself, let alone establish that a goddess was recognized as Yahweh's sexual partner in pre-exilic Israel.[5]

The king, who should have represented Yahweh in the ritual portion of the hierogamy, cannot be shown to have played the role of the god in the Israelite cult.[6] The cult prostitutes, who might have played the part of the goddess, are never associated with the king; their functioning seems to concern individual rather than communal oblations.[7]

The proper occasion for the Sacred Marriage is also missing. The festival dances are not, in fact, described as annual sexual orgies,[8] and if a cultic act took place in the _sukkôt_, there is presently no means for determining what it was.[9]

Finally, the hypothesis that the Song of Songs contains the vestiges of a liturgical text has not been proved. Parallels with other ancient Near Eastern love poetry may indicate literary borrowing at most, if indeed they demonstrate anything more than the ubiquity of amorous imagery.[1] In general, the cultic view leans heavily on a drastic rearrangement of the extant text,[2] or on a kind of interpretation of words and phrases which actually constitutes a revival of the allegorical method.[3] Efforts to find a god and goddess in the Song have prompted resort to linguistically debatable associations, or to the notion that the divine names were present in a kind of cultic code language.[4]

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[1] See above, p. 199.

[2] _Ibid._, pp. 200-204.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 204-207.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 207-210.

[5] _Ibid._, pp. 210-21.

[6] _Ibid._, pp. 221-24.

[7] _Ibid._, pp. 224-28.

[8] _Ibid._, pp. 228-30.

[9] _Ibid._, pp. 231-33.

The evidence for the celebration of a _hieros gamos_ in Israel is slight indeed. It is not surprising that its advocates must also rely upon the accusation that the more convincing signs have been removed by ancient theological censors.[5] Such a charge is in a sense unanswerable, since its refutation requires "proving the negative."[6] Nonetheless the logical probability seems far greater on the side of those who say that such signs would have been recorded, rather than elided, as further testimony to the magnitude of human apostasy and the answering marvel of divine grace.[7]

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[1] See above, pp. 233-38.

[2] _Ibid._, pp. 240-42.

[3] _Ibid._, pp. 242-44.

[4] _Ibid._, pp. 244-46.

[5] _Ibid._, pp. 196-97.

[6] _Ibid._, p. 17.

[7] _Ibid._, pp. 209-10, 219, 224, 247-48.

In short, Pedersen's summary of the situation still seems perfectly cogent: If the Sacred Marriage was once celebrated by the Israelite kings, then "every trace of it has disappeared."[1]

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[1] Israel, III-IV, p. 471. One might conclude by noting H. W. F. Saggs' comparative judgment: "We have seen that insofar as the king in Mesopotamia was divine, his divinity derived from his assimilation to the god in the Sacred Marriage [see above, p. 98, nn. 2, 3]. If there was no tradition in Israel of the king's participation in a Sacred Marriage, there is no reason why the king should ever have been considered (even in the limited Mesopotamian sense) as divine" (The Greatness . . ., p. 389).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF THESIS

This study of the so-called hieros gamos in the ancient Near East has pursued two goals. It has sought, first, to assess the data which supposedly testify to the celebration of such a complex of myth and ritual in pre-Christian Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria-Canaan, and Palestine. It has attempted, in the second place, to evaluate the claim that these celebrations were so homogeneous as to suggest their derivation from a common "pattern."[1] For these purposes, the hieros gamos has been understood to include a myth of divine sexual union, ritually enacted by a king and his royal or consecrated partner, and issuing in the renewal of fertility throughout the realm.[2]

Methodological interests have figured strongly in this investigation, which has intended to call into question certain shibboleths long active in comparative religious studies. Among these are the notions of annual ritual mass mating,[3] and of "dying and rising gods."[4] Skepticism has also been directed against the assumptions that myths are always accompanied by corresponding rituals,[5] that cultural parallels necessarily demonstrate contact and diffusion,[6] that "similarities are generic," revealing "patterns" of thought and behavior,[1] and that therefore the appearance of one element in the "pattern" implies the probable presence of its entirety.[2] In general, then, this investigation has contended for the methodological principle that conclusions should be directly traceable to specific data, recorded by documents which are geographically and chronologically contextual.

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[1] See above, p. ii.

[2] Ibid., p. 1.

[3] Ibid., pp. 7-8, 177-78, 229-30.

[4] Ibid., pp. 59-62.

[5] Ibid., pp. 14-15, 160-61.

[6] Ibid., pp. 15-18.

Proceeding along these lines, the present writer concludes that among the cultures surveyed, the *hieros gamos* has been clearly demonstrated only in Mesopotamia.[3] Mythical hierogamies, but not corresponding rituals, are attested in Egypt[4] and Ugarit;[5] neither can presently be shown to have existed in Hebrew Palestine.[6] Fertility was certainly a matter of concern in all of these ancient cultures, but only in Mesopotamia is its connection with the Sacred Marriage expressly recorded.[7]

Far from testifying to a consistent inter-cultural motif, the hierogamic materials from Egypt and Ugarit are distinctly different from those encountered in Mesopotamia,[8] while the Biblical texts really offer no basis for comparison.[9] There were five elements which allegedly composed an ancient Near Eastern "myth-and-ritual pattern."[10] On the findings of this study, that number ought to be reduced by one.

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[1] See above, pp. 18-22.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 23-27.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 76-78, 86-91.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 150.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 191-93.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 250-52.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 152, 193, 248-49.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52, 191.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 252.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

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